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THE
GREAT CONTROVERSY

BETWEEN
GOD AND MAN.

ITS
ORIGIN, PROGRESS, AND END.

"JEHOVAH HATH A CONTROVERSY WITH THE NATIONS."—JEREMIAH.

BY H. L. HASTINGS.

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THE GREAT CONTROVERSY.

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P R E F A C E.

To write a complete and perfect account of the controversy of Jehovah with mankind, would require the repetition of all human history, both sacred and profane. This work has not been attempted. Only a brief sketch of the workings of a divine hand, as manifested in some of the more prominent events of past ages, has been designed. The reflective reader can use his own judgment and information in filling up the hasty outline.

If the representations of future scenes be regarded as too definite, the only excuse is, they are transcribed from the Scriptures of truth; if they are considered as too vague, it is because we see in a glass darkly, and have not reached the perfection of knowledge.

If the truths here presented should be unwelcome to the popular mind, it only indicates that the attitude of that mind towards truth is the same that it ever has been. To the pilgrims and strangers on the earth, whose hearts and hopes are in the better land, perhaps these pages may be acceptable.

If God shall make them a blessing to any person, and shall by them in any wise glorify his own name, the object of the writer's prayers and labors will have been attained. That the blessing of God may attend this feeble effort, is the earnest desire of

THE AUTHOR.

ROCHESTER, N. Y., *January*, 1858.

THE
G R E A T C O N T R O V E R S Y
BETWEEN GOD AND MAN.

CHAPTER I.

THAT the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain, beneath countless burdens, afflictions and curses ; is clearly written both in the book of nature and in the book of God. Rest, quiet, peace and enjoyment, in their fullness and perfection, are here unknown. The spirit of disturbance is, in its influence, wide as the world. Earth moves in disorder ! physical, mental and moral. Like some gigantic machinery, dislocated by tremendous shocks, it rolls and crashes in harsh confusion ; it grates upon our ears in its terrible course ; and it bears within its mighty whirl the torn and bleeding forms of those who have vainly endeavored to reduce it to order, symmetry and harmony. In the natural world there is enough of order to indicate that it was made by a Divine architect ; enough of disorder to demonstrate that it has been marred by a malignant hand. Yet

creative power predominates, else the ruin would long ere this have been complete. Hence arises the pleasing hope that the ruin may sometime be repaired ; that the world may again shine beneath its Creator's smile, and yet once more awaken star-born melodies, sweeter even than those that rang at first amid its birth-day bloom :* that where sin abounded grace may so much the more abound, and the conclusion be better than the commencement. That man redeemed may be better than man when created, and the world regenerated be better even than it was when God at first pronounced it very good ; that the race of man may enjoy a deeper and richer peace with God than ever before, when the abiding 'enmity' of ages shall be forever slain.

To such a condition of peaceful and permanent blessedness humanity aspires. But, alas ! that the promise and the hope of it should be so long deferred, until the heart grows sick with disappointment, and the expectant soul is wearied with the lapse of years. The night of sorrow has been long, but as yet no day has dawned. Toil must precede rest, and trials go before triumphs. The anguish or the hour of travail must be endured ere the deliverance and consequent joy can be tasted. Yet the wheels of progress move but slowly, and the prospect seems sometimes to grow darker day by day.

As we survey the world, we behold it rocked in

* Job xxxviii : 7.

restless tumult by the fury of contending forces. Deeply as men desire times of national and social quiet, they fail to enjoy them. Much as they covet peace and prosperity, their desires are still ungratified. And all that genius, and wisdom, and philanthropy have accomplished for humanity, still leaves the whole head faint, and the whole heart sick. The dire malady that has so long afflicted the world is still uncured ; nor have the ten thousand panaceas of men, wise in their own conceits, accomplished the much desired and often promised relief. Though again and again some new state-ship, freighted with the hopes of humanity, is launched, none reach the haven of security. A worm eats through one—a gale founders another, a sand-bar breaches a third, and the lee-shore of time is strewn with the scattered fragments of many a stranded navy.

Why is all this ? Why is every human project a failure, every human hope a phantom, every human promise a falsehood ? Why has the political world seethed and tossed like ocean in a storm, for nigh six thousand years, and why does it still show no token of “the working of a sea before a calm, that rocks itself to rest” ? Why is it that after so many storms, instead of calm, the eye looks out on clouds that give no doubtful presage of still more terrific tempests ? What is the cause of earth’s long continued rage—its ceaseless din of war, commotion, and strife ? Why do nations rise like gourds and

fall like potsherds? Why do governments linger out a brief existence stained with cruelty and crime, and then go down unregretted to a forgotten grave, to make room for others that are as vile as those who have gone before them? Why is all this long continued struggle? Why this incessant tumult and confusion? Reason, philosophy and history can give us no proper solution of this question. They cannot solve this problem of the ages that are past. They miss the real causes, and only glance superficially at the difficulties in the case. Only an Omniscient mind can trace these complicated difficulties to their secret cause, and unravel this mysterious web which meshes the events of human history. God alone can answer these questions, and His word affords us an answer. It is brief, it is simple, it is truthful. Kept from the wise and prudent, it is revealed unto babes. Hidden from the great and mighty, it is disclosed to the humble and the believing, "THE LORD HATH A CONTROVERSY WITH THE NATIONS."*

This fact, duly appreciated, and this alone, can unravel the mystery which has for ages enveloped the political condition and destiny of this world. To comprehend it without this, would be like comprehending astronomy while ignoring gravitation. *This* is the great truth, hard to believe, unwelcome to the ear, and repulsive to the fancy: yet which

* Jeremiah xxv: 31.

alone can enable us to gaze with an intelligent calmness upon the various mutations of time ; or divine with correctness the probable issue of the tumults that encompass us. "The Lord hath a controversy with the nations." This is written in lines of blood and fire in the history of the past, and a hand of mysterious shade inscribes it upon the events of the present and the hopes of the future, in characters as terribly significant as those that startled the drunken king of Babylon when his doom was written upon his palace wall.*

To understand and exhibit the bearings of this fact upon the history and destiny of the race, it will be expedient to consider this controversy in its origin, its progress, its present position, and its anticipated termination. To do this properly we must do it scripturally. There is no other light than the word of God, that sheds a gleam of radiance through the ages of primeval darkness ; and none but this that can pierce with its resplendent ray the cloudy curtain that veils the mysterious future.

To learn the *origin* of Jehovah's controversy with the nations, we need first to learn what circumstances would furnish a proper *ground* for a controversy between Jehovah and his creatures on the earth. We are not left to vague conjecture concerning this point, for the facts revealed in the scriptures settle it most conclusively. When in ancient times the

* Daniel v: 26-27.

prophet of God became the reprover of Israel for their iniquities, he bore to them this message, "Hear the word of the LORD, ye children of Israel: for the LORD hath A CONTROVERSY with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood."*

This declaration discloses the *reason* why Jehovah had a controversy with his own peculiar people, the nation of his covenant and his choice. They had rebelled against him and broken his law. They had violated their most solemn obligations. They had dishonored his glorious name, and caused it to be blasphemed among the nations around. They had despised the messages of his grace, and had stained with blood and polluted with crime the goodly land which he had appointed as their heritage. Jehovah held them responsible for their acts. He held them amenable to the rule of *right*. He required of them obedience to his righteous laws. They rejected this responsibility. They refused their allegiance to the king of heaven. They set at naught his high authority. Hence he had a controversy with them. Sin was the cause of it. Sin made and perpetuated the breach—*sin*, transgression of God's holy law, provoked the indignation of the universal Ruler, and

* Hosea iv: 1-2.

lifted up the puny hand of man against his Maker and his God.

Sin, then, is an appropriate *cause* of controversy between God and man. And the origin of the great controversy which we propose to consider, is to be referred back to that primal transgression which interrupted the existing harmony between the creature and the Creator, which made this globe an accursed and revolted province in the Divine dominions, and this race an accursed and rebellious race. It was *sin* that caused this world to be a scene of mourning, lamentation and woe ; sin that blighted the fair prospects which lay before the progenitors of our race ; sin that turned paradise into a desert ; and sin that arrayed man, in all his impotence and frailty, against the might and wisdom, the love and mercy of the Deity.

We are then to regard this controversy as a controversy between *right* and *wrong*, between good and evil ; between the supporter of righteousness on one hand, and the perpetrators of iniquity on the other. Between a just and Almighty ruler and his frail and rebellious subjects. The controversy on the part of Jehovah is a just and righteous one. As such then it admits of no adjustment by compromise or by a yielding up of the everlasting principles of *right*, to the will of misguided men. Nor could it be adjusted by mutual neglect or indifference, which should allow the tumult to subside in quiet and in forget-

fulness of the sins that caused the strife. No. The wisdom that cometh from above is, in its operations, first *pure*, then *peaceable*. The *root* of bitterness must be plucked up before the fruits and blossoms can be eradicated. Sin and violence, and war, and blasphemy, must *end* before the controversy on their account, can be adjusted.

There are, therefore, but two ways in which the controversy between God and man may end. First, man must yield to the reasonable requirements of his Maker, and return, meek, penitent and obedient unto his allegiance to his God ; or, second, if he refuse to do this and continue persistently and determinedly to set at naught the Divine authority, rejecting offered mercy and despising extended grace, he must at last fall beneath the stroke of that justice which he has outraged, and perish under the execution of those laws which he has violated. He must bow or break. He must yield or be overthrown. These considerations may assist us in forming our estimate of the course and issue of this controversy.

If we commence with man's first revolt by disobedience in Eden, we find that the Almighty, in his wisdom and sovereignty, saw fit to lay certain important restrictions upon the human family, which had thus early risen up against his authority. These restrictions were such, that their tendency was to remind the race of their dependence, and their impotence, and thus tame the pride of their rebellious

hearts. Hence, that man might not run a race of lusty and unrestrained excess, rioting upon the bounties of nature, and consuming upon his passions the blessings of providence, the very 'ground' was 'cursed' on his account, and his daily bread was made to depend upon constant and toilsome exertion. And further, lest he should go on immortal in his rebellion, and eternal in his sin and hatred of God, his existence was *limited*, and he was driven forth from the garden of delight and excluded from "the tree of life," lest he should "eat and live forever:" while the sentence, "dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return," fell like a knell of death upon his ear, and withered in a moment those hopes which he had based upon the falsehoods of the deceiver. These were the divinely appointed safeguards to prevent the overleaping rampancy of human wickedness, and to avert the danger of unending rebellion.*

* Genesis iii: 17-24.

CHAPTER II.

IN what manner the gracious proposals of divine mercy were communicated to primitive generations, we are not definitely informed. We are taught that our first parents received their instructions while in their state of innocency, and even after their transgression, directly from the divine legislator himself. Certain we are, that to succeeding generations "he left not himself without a witness." And the fact that he had in all ages those who served him and were reconciled to him, proves conclusively that there was no *necessary* ignorance of the conditions upon which he would accept and forgive his creatures who sought to know and to do his will. And now, if the world would have heeded those proposals—if the race had but unitedly returned to God—if the rebellious would have responded to the call of divine mercy, how soon the controversy might have been adjusted, peace restored, the curse removed, the flaming sword withdrawn, Paradise reöpened, the race reconciled, and the blight and sin and ruin of earth's controversy with God forever ended. But this desirable consummation was postponed indefinitely through the stubbornness and wickedness of man. The age

wore away, marked by divine goodness and by human iniquity. Centuries which were granted to individuals as a season for repentance and submission, were misimproved; and death came with tardy steps, only to find them hoary headed and incorrigible rebels against divine authority. The race, abusing a protracted probation, grew worse and worse, incurring deeper guilt, and manifesting more determined hostility to their Maker. Individuals meanwhile had their hearts inclined to obedience to the divine precepts. Here and there "men began to call upon the name of the Lord,"* and they stood as witnesses of his faithfulness and love. A succession of holy men walked with God, and by faith obtained a good report, which has endured to all subsequent generations.† But the world, as a *world*—the race, as a *race*—became lamentably corrupt. God saw the wickedness of man that it was great. The controversy presented no favorable aspect. The hope of adjustment grew less and less. The race would not repent of sin, nor bow to divine authority. The earth was filled with violence and strife and impiety. The imaginations of man's heart were evil and evil alone. The bent of his mind was opposed to God, and his will rose proud and rampant against the supremacy of the Almighty One.‡

In his wisdom Jehovah determined to bring the

* Genesis iv: 26.

† Genesis v: 22. Hebrews xi: 1-5.

‡ Genesis vi: 3-7.

fruitless controversy with that generation to a definite and terrible issue. But he would not condemn hastily, nor inflict judgments on men unwarned. The message of warning and admonition was committed to Noah, "a just man," and one who obeyed the divine requirements. To him was disclosed the fact that the world was sentenced to destruction, that their probation was limited, and that within an hundred and twenty years the race must yield to God or be destroyed. The patriarch raised his voice in warning and reproof, and became to the surrounding multitudes "a preacher of righteousness." The world was under sentence of death—its inhabitants were as "spirits in prison,"* while God by *his* spirit gave them yet admonitions and warnings, so that they might repent and be saved. But the same purpose of rebellion which had provoked the righteous wrath of God upon the race, closed their hearts against the admonitions of his spirit, and blinded their minds that they should not discern his truth. And so, while they might have repented, they rioted in lust and crime. When they should have fasted in sackcloth, they ate, and drank, and bought, and sold, and planted, and builded.† Thus they filled up the cup of their iniquities, and treasured up wrath against the day of wrath which was so swiftly rolling on. In the pursuits of business, or the enjoyments of pleasure, they wore out the last hours of divine

* 1 Peter iii : 18-20.

† Matthew xxiv : 36-39.

forbearance and human probation, which bore them swiftly and unconsciously on to the approaching catastrophe.

The heart of Noah was sad in view of the scene. "Moved with fear," "by faith" he "prepared an ark for the saving of himself and house," thereby giving them an example which they might follow, and so condemning the world, and becoming heir of the righteousness which is by faith.* He bore the insulting mockery of the sinners around him. He toiled and preached; he built his ark and warned his fellows; but it was all in vain. At length God calls him to enter the completed structure, and with his family he obeys the call. The beasts of earth and fowls of heaven, moved by a strange impulse, come and find refuge with the servant of the Lord. But the scoffing world pass heedlessly on. The solemn hours of anxious suspense fled swiftly by, and finally, when all around was apparent peace, the predicted judgment came. Dark clouds mantled the sky, and hung like a pall of death above the rebellious and sinful generation. The flood-gates from on high were opened, and poured down their waters like a raging tempest. The foundations of the dark abyss beneath were all unsettled, and the upgushing floods mingled with the descending torrents. Earth reeled with mighty throes as if tossed by an earthquake's power; and above, the blazing sheets of

* Heb. xi: 7.

lurid flame lighted the dark and threatening clouds. No fancy can paint the terrors of that tremendous scene—when the waves seemed to rise and roll in boiling masses along the gloomy horizon—when the surging waters swept away cities, and tribes, and kingdoms—when lightnings danced and thunders bellowed above the swelling tide—when ascending and descending waters at last lifted the ark upon their bosom, and bore the huge structure like a toy away,—when joy and mirth gave place to the wild and discordant wailing of despair—when the accumulating waters swept at last smoothly above the loftiest peaks, and drowned in their death-gurgle the last of the revolted and heaven-defying race. And thus amid the wild voices of deep calling unto deep—amid the thunders and the lightnings, of Omnipotent power—amid the wasteness and desolation of a shoreless deluge, the controversy was closed, the war was over, and the tide of impiety was stayed. But the race was destroyed, and the only gleam of light and hope for humanity shone through the window of that storm-driven but God-protected ark that glided calmly over the swelling floods.*

The emergence of the deluged world from beneath the level wave, furnished a theatre for further disclosures of divine mercy, and the egress of Noah and his family from the ark, afforded a race which could still further illustrate the facts of mortal depravity.

* Genesis vi : vii : viii.

The controversy with the antediluvians was closed—closed in their overthrow—closed in their destruction. They would not yield, nor repent, nor be obedient to the call of God, hence they must *die*; and this seemed the only way to secure the salvation of any portion of the race. For, even then, but eight souls had escaped the contagion of evil; and it was morally certain, from the course of events, that another generation would be totally and universally apostate and impenitent. Hence the imperious necessity of the deluge, that the race might not utterly perish in their ungodliness, but that a few might be rescued from the overwhelming destruction.

And now it was left with this single family to come and yield unfeigned obedience and homage to Jehovah. Thus might the world be at peace with God once more; at least until a future generation should again revolt from him. But the inclinations of perverse humanity were opposed to divine restraint. The descendants of Noah engaged anew in controversy with God, not to conclude, but to prolong it. The solemn schooling of the deluge and the ark seemed lost upon them. Disobeying the divine command to disperse and people the earth, they dwelt in a plain in the land of Shinar. Here, in direct contravention of the will of God, they commenced to build a city and a tower, whose top might reach to heaven, that they might make them a *name*, and, gathering around it as a central landmark, avoid be-

ing dispersed abroad throughout all the earth.* God saw that that tower and city bade fair to be the nucleus of a system of gigantic transgressions and guilt. All were of one language, and under such a consolidated system of operations as they now proposed, the scenes of antediluvian iniquity would be speedily reenacted.

Something must be done. Divine wisdom was equal to the emergency, and the confusion of their tongues accomplished the necessary work. As each looked with idiotic stare upon his neighbor, and listened to the strange and unintelligible mouthings that were heard on every hand, 'they left off to build,' and confused, perplexed and disgusted, they departed to various lands, and left the name of "Babel" or "Confusion" as the permanent designation of the scene of their first discomfiture.† This confusion of tongues, like the original curse inflicted on man, became an additional check for the prevention of universal impiety. Like imprisoned criminals, forbidden to speak together lest they should conspire to work mischief, so the race were shut up in small divisions, unable to concoct or comprehend any scheme of combined, simultaneous and universal rebellion. And never was this restriction removed until the apostles of Christ were commissioned and empowered to publish the message of reconciliation and salvation in all the world. God then caused his servants

* Gen. xi: 14.

† Genesis xi: 9.

for the time to be free from those restraints, laid upon man on the plain of Shinar,* but his enemies must abide beneath them, or only partially deliver themselves by slow and tedious study and research. Upon this basis, and with this new restraint, the controversy was continued.

But man, though restrained, was not reformed. Not many generations had passed away, ere from the idolatrous inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Abraham was called forth and separated from his kindred, in order that he, amid all the surrounding wickedness, being severed from the friendship of the world, might become "the friend of God." To him promises were made. With him Jehovah held converse. To him angels appeared. His faith was subjected to the severest trials and found steadfast. Believing God was counted to him for righteousness. Thus he became the type and father of a faithful seed, that was to be innumerable as the sands by the sea shore, and illustrious as the stars of heaven. In his purpose and course, however, he was almost solitary and alone. Partaking of the prevailing impurity, his father's family were so unlike him, that he was required to forsake their society before he could enter into the everlasting covenant by which he became the father of the faithful and the heir of the world.† Like some lofty pharos on which the watchful voyager gazes when many leagues away

* Acts ii: 4-11.

† Romans iv: 13.

from land, so Abraham stands, a glorious example of the power of living faith, made perfect by obedient works. God gave him as a kind of pattern to the believing portion of the race, who have the assurance that they who are of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.*

But he and his scanty progeny were almost the only instances of faith in the world—and the brief biographies of an Abraham, a Lot and a Melchizedek, make up almost the sum total of the religious history of those times. Outside of the tents of the patriarchs, and away from the altars of the faithful, the great controversy went on. The earth increased in crime. War, robbery and murder were unprovoked on every hand, and finally wickedness seemed about to resume its uninterrupted and universal sway.

Away upon the fertile plains of Palestine, beside those verdant banks where the waters of Jordan rolled their fructifying flood, impiety rose to its greatest height. Pride and luxury—idleness and dissipation—revolt and blasphemy, with licentiousness so vile, and deep, and damning, and promiscuous, that purity became impossible amidst it; these reigned in rampant and lusty pride within “the cities of the plain.” God in long-suffering forbore to punish for many years. All nature spoke to that people of goodness and love; but it spoke in vain.

* Galatians iii: 9.

The voice of mercy they would not hear. Every day and every night the All-seeing eye beheld, and the All-hearing ear heard actions so vile, so impious, so defiant, so abominable, that *mercy*, in all her boundless love, found no just reason for further kindness to them. Indeed an everlasting and indiscriminate forbearance, had in it nothing of the qualities of mercy in this case. Continuance of such a plague-spot on the earth, had in it neither mercy nor compassion. Surely it was not mercy to those vile abusers of their Maker's goodness, to continue them in a course of sin and devilishness, in which each departing hour only served to sink them deeper and deeper beneath the tide of guilt and woe. Continuance of that state had also the character of an unmitigated curse to those around, who were insulted by their words, defiled by their abominations, seduced by their influence, and misled by their examples, and who, if such a condition of things had been perpetuated, would have sunk ere long into worse than antediluvian guilt, and have been by the same unerring principles of rectitude and justice engulfed in an universal doom.

As the kind and merciful physician arrests a mortal malady, by the excision of the diseased member, when all other remedies prove ineffectual, nor dreams of cruelty, though the pain produced is most excruciating,—so the merciful Dispenser of good to man saw fit by efforts equally prompt, to arrest the tide

of wickedness which portended a revolt as universal as it was incurable.

When the inhabitants of those cities had refused all offers of mercy and of grace—when they had trampled upon forbearance, and had insulted long-suffering, then God brought the controversy with that people to a close. When his servant had gone forth, when none but the sinful race were there, then God hung above them a pall of gloom and wrath.—Anon the sheeted flames burst forth—lightnings danced upon the gloomy cloud, and a tempest red with fire and flame, poured its sulphurous torrents upon the cities of the plain. The work was done. The cities were overwhelmed—their iniquities were fearfully expiated—the rushing wave of pollution and blasphemy was met and arrested by a mightier wave of fire, and the dead sea, the desolate plain, and the surrounding ruin, were all that remained as tokens of the folly of fighting against God. They were set forth as an example to them that after should live ungodly, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

But though mankind had been so solemnly taught by divine Providence—though the voice of the many waters of the deluge spake to them—though the desolations of Sodom were more significant than words, more impressive than aught of human eloquence; yet men still refused to listen to the messages of mercy from their God. They would not

submit to him—their hearts abhorred the rule of Jehovah, and, misled by Satan, and forgetful of Divine authority, they strove to walk in the ways of their base and beastly passions, regardless of consequences either proximate or remote.

In the process of years the descendants of Abraham passed down to Egypt, to escape the rigors of a famine, and to enjoy the plenty which had been secured for that country by the counsels and administration of Joseph, whom they before had basely sold. The sons of Jacob, with their father, located themselves in the fertile land called Goshen. Here for a time they increased in wealth and numbers, and still maintained to some extent the knowledge of the true God of heaven and earth. But in the mutations of human affairs, their prosperity departed. Another king arose. He forgot the national obligations to a foreign race. He violated the word of his predecessor, which had granted them the peaceful possession of the lands which they desired. The vast enterprises in which he was engaged afforded an opportunity, and the numbers and wealth of the stranger nation a pretext, for reducing them to slavery. He laid upon them heavy burdens. He placed over them task-masters that ruled them with rigor. He disregarded their rights, both natural and acquired. He sought, by a violence most cruel, inhuman, and despicable, to destroy their increase and diminish their numbers. He resisted all their entreaties for an

amelioration of the rigor of their servitude. He defied their power, and trembled not at the justice of that God whose chosen nation they were. Hence he waged war with Jehovah ; by pride, by oppression, by infidelity, by murder, and by conspiracy against the rights and liberties of those who were weaker than he ; those whom Jehovah had separated from the nations and constituted as his own special charge. Thus the Egyptians entered into a controversy with God. By violating the everlasting principles of right—by trampling upon the immutable laws of justice and of truth—they brought themselves in puny but determined warfare against the Almighty God.

But he was prepared for the conflict. In the person of an infant committed by faith to the frail casket of bulrushes, pitied providentially by an Egyptian princess, trained in godliness in the house of his Hebrew parents, and instructed in earthly wisdom in the regal halls of the Pharaohs ; gifted with rare graces of person and unparelled mental attractions ; enriched by the grace of God and the consciousness of a sublime and lofty destiny ; possessed of an heroic greatness which endured as seeing him who was invisible ; endowed with a fortitude of soul which enabled him to labor, and to wait for ages, if need be, for his recompense of reward ; upheld by a clear and vivid faith which made the distant “city of foundations” as real, and its promised glories as palpable to him as were the waters of the Nile or the

palaces upon its fertile banks ; schooled by deep meditation in the solitude of the desert, and in the society of the sages of his time ; strong in that hidden might which his growing soul had gathered in loneliness from the mighty God, while in the wilderness of Midean he kept his father Jethro's sheep ; in such a person as this, the Almighty possessed an instrument which served well as an agent by whom he might manifest his will intelligibly to his people and to their oppressors ; and afford them every requisite opportunity for obeying his commands, and also of receiving the blessings attendant upon obedience. Attended by a brother who was almost his equal, and in some respects his superior, he entered the land of Egypt and the palace of the Egyptian monarch, bearing proposals for an adjustment of the growing controversy. The requirement was simple and reasonable. "Thus saith Jehovah, God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness." The answer was characteristic of the oppressor, the robber, and the spoiler : "Who is JEHOVAH that I should obey *his* voice to let Israel go ? I know not JEHOVAH, neither will I let Israel go. Wherefore do ye, Moses and Aaron, hinder the people from their works ? get you unto your burdens." And then came the fruits of this agitation, in the shape of heavier tasks and renewed impositions ; and instead of granting deliverance he said, "They be *idle*, therefore they cry, saying, Let

us go and sacrifice to our God. Let more work be laid upon the men, that they may labor therein : and let them not regard vain words.”* Thus with obdurate and rebellious pertinacity, did this oppressive monarch adhere to the rule of conduct which he had chosen, and resist divine interference with the unrighteous institutions of his government. But though defiance was bold it was futile. He had not well counted the cost, when he entered the lists with an omnipotent foe. Plagues came upon the refractory nation. Plagues wide, and grievous, and sore. Plagues which, though the magicians might succeed in imitating, they strove in vain to remove. Plagues which followed each other in rapid succession, like scourge-strokes on the offender’s back. Often did Pharaoh, moved by these calamities, partially relent, but soon he hardened his heart. Again the loud murmurs of his afflicted servants roused him to some faint degree of interest concerning the matter ; and then, as the infliction abated, he relapsed into the same state of stubborn disobedience. At length sorer judgments pressed from him the essence of meanness, in the shape of a consent that they whom he had spoiled and robbed might go forth, leaving behind them their flocks and herds and possessions ; thus subjecting them to renewed robbery and enriching himself by their departure.

This insulting proposal was sternly refused. Tem-

* Exodus v: 1-9.

pests of fire and hail then desolated the land, and ruin sat brooding over the mighty realm. The controversy was no nearer adjustment than at first. And God, provoked by past oppression, had now hardened Pharaoh's heart. It is terrible indeed for a man to resist the mercies and the chastisements of God, and grow hard beneath them as the clay grows hard beneath the summer's heat ; it is awful when God has said of a man, he is joined to idols, let him alone ; when thenceforth he prospers in the world, but treads a flowery path down to the dread perdition of ungodly men. But there is another state more dreadful still.—When a man has hardened his heart till he has placed himself where reformation is impossible, when he has stood out against all mercy and grace, and deliberately, and persistently, and determinedly said to God, “Depart from me ;” and then, when emboldened by ease and immunity from judicial visitation, when trusting in the enjoyment of a fancied safety, he ventures to resist the march of the Divine purposes, and to make war upon a God who had previously left him to himself. Then having passed beyond the sphere of mercy, and beyond the limits of his passive rebellion, when he breaks out in open and defiant warfare against God, he becomes henceforth an example of Divine power, and may be used without injustice, in any and every way which may be needful to convince the world of the might of God and of the weakness of his puny

foes. In this condition was the Egyptian monarch, and for this purpose God caused him to stand henceforth as a monument of his indignation. He preserved him long,—he delayed the merited visitation for the purpose of revealing in him his power in the eyes of all the nations. Hence God hardened Pharaoh's heart. No judgments could reform him,—no mercies could melt him, and, enveloped in judicial blindness, he was led on to meet his doom.

The passover and the sprinkling of blood were kept by faith among the children of Israel. The death-wail of the first-born of Egypt filled the land with notes of woe, and caused the Egyptians to demand, and Pharaoh to permit, the immediate departure of Israel ; and early on the morrow the captive nation began their march. Directed by God, guided by Moses, and hastened by Pharaoh, they stretched their long lines across the plain. Each house of bondage contributed to swell the host, and the whole, like a mighty army departed from Succoth, and followed the majestic guiding cloud to the borders of the wilderness. Thence they turned and passed by Migdol, and coming where two lofty mountains flanked an intervening valley, they entered it, and marching down, encamped on the verge of the Red Sea. But when once they were gone, the old and ungodly passions burned again in the Egyptian monarch's heart. He gathered his warriors, he assembled his horsemen, he prepared his chariots, and

with arms and armies he started forth to recapture the fleeing fugitives. The people, the spoils and the women were the objects that stimulated their pursuit. Rage, covetousness and lust hurried them with headlong haste. Away they speed, the earth trembles beneath the clatter of the countless hoofs of Egyptian horses, and as the Israelites were encamping on the borders of the sea, they heard in the distance the roar of the seething multitude, the cries of rage, and lust, and haste, the jostling of chariot wheels, the neighing of horses, and the rattling of armor. They saw the dust that attended their hurried march, and in it the glitter of gold, the flash of steel, and all the dread accompaniments of war's tumultuous and desolating tide. Cries of anguish and despair rose from the lips of the imperiled host of Israel. And then came the mandate, "Speak to Israel that they go forward." The wondrous rod was outstretched above the foaming waves; the billows crouched, the flood divided and stood congealed in giant walls on either side, while between them lay, for Israel, the highway of salvation from their foes. "By faith they passed through the Red Sea dry shod." The old man and the young, the matron and the maid, the little timid child, holding the hand of his stalwart father; all, with bleating flocks and lowing herds before them, pressed on in the awful pathway. The sea was about them, they learned the hidden secrets of its silent

depths—the waves were on either hand, the awful cloud of glory beamed on them and on their foes, and the everlasting God led them through the mighty deep. By faith they passed the sea. Faith gave courage to the weakest heart. Faith held them steadfast in their purpose. Faith chased away the last vestige of their fear and caused them to walk solemnly yet triumphantly on. At length they reached the shore. The last of all the mighty host was gathered on the other verge of the flood, and Pharaoh saw with rage and disappointment his prey eluding his grasp and passing beyond his reach. Could he be foiled thus? Could he at last relinquish his hellish scheme? Nay, he would make one more effort. “Whom the Gods will to destroy, they first make mad,” said the ancient heathens. So it was now. The great controversy between Pharaoh and Jehovah approached its termination. But there was one more act. God hardened the monster’s heart until reckless madness ruled his mind supreme. And then—the way is yet open—Israel is yet in sight—he will try the perils of that awful passage. Why should not he yet be victor in the strife? And so those foaming steeds turn toward the margin of the flood. ‘Forward!’ shouted the king, now but a maniac burning with lust and rage. ‘Forward!’ rings the maddening cry from the lips of each foe of God. Down the verge they plunge into the most awful path an army ever

trod. On, on, rush chariots ; on, on, leap horses ; on, on, press the armed men ; mad, wild, furious, they haste into the awful net. And when the shore is vacant, when all are within the watery gorge, then invisible hands hold the rushing chariot wheels—they drag heavily on the miry bottom ; the steeds flag in their hurried course ; the charioteers urge them on in vain ; and dire dismay settles upon the infatuated throng.

And now Moses stands upon the beetling shore, and overlooks the mighty host. The sky grows black with a gathering tempest—the cloud of fire glares angrily through the gloom—and as the morning breaks, the wonder-working rod is raised aloft once more. Oh, how those solid walls of waters melt ! “*Flee—flee !*” but flight is too late. The sea asserts its rule. The gurgling waves roll back with torrent-like flow—the death wail of Egypt’s chivalry sounds loud and shrill above the roar of the tempest and the booming of the Red Sea’s billows—the storm-tossed waters rave and thunder above the Egyptians’ heads—the deep boils awfully with wild and tameless rage—the vivid lightnings gleam along the darkened sky, and hiss amid the swelling waves—the thunders mutter the funeral dirge of the ungodly host—and the controversy of Jehovah with Egypt and its rulers is closed, in the might and majesty of God, by the destruction of his infatuated foes. Above the roar and confusion of their over-

throw there rings from the other shore a pean of lofty praise. A few snatches of the song have floated on the air, and come down through the years of many generations, and are still known among men. "Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto Jehovah, and spake saying—

I will sing unto Jehovah, for he hath triumphed gloriously :
The horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.
Jehovah is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation :
He is my God and I will prepare him an habitation ;
My father's God, and I will exalt him.

Jehovah is a man of war. Jehovah is his name.
Pharaoh's chariots and his host hath he cast into the sea :
His chosen captains also are drowned in the Red Sea.
The depths have covered them : they sank into the bottom as a stone.

Thy right hand, O Jehovah, is become glorious in power :
Thy right hand, O Jehovah, hath dashed in pieces the enemy.
And in the greatness of thine excellency
Thou hast overthrown them that rose up against thee.
Thou sentest forth thy wrath, which consumed them as stubble.
And with the blast of thy nostrils the waters were gathered
together,

The floods stood upright as an heap,
The depths were congealed in the heart of the sea.

The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake,
I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them ;
I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them.

Thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea covered them :
They sank as lead in the mighty waters.
Who is like unto thee, O Jehovah, among the Gods ?
Who is like thee, glorious in holiness,
Fearful in praises, doing wonders ?

Thou stretchest out thy right hand,
The earth swallowed them.
Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people thou hast redeemed :
Thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation.

The people shall hear, and be afraid :
Sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of Palestina.
Then the dukes of Edom shall be amazed ;
The mighty men of Moab, trembling shall take hold upon them ;
All the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away.
Fear and dread shall fall upon them ;
By the greatness of thy arm they shall be still as a stone ;
Till thy people pass over, O Jehovah.
Till the people pass over, which thou hast purchased.
Thou shalt bring them in,
And plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance.

In the place, O Jehovah, which thou hast made for thee to dwell in,
In the sanctuary, O Jehovah, which thy hands have established.
Jehovah shall reign forever and ever.

For the horse of Pharaoh went in with his chariots
and with his horsemen into the sea, and the Lord
brought again the waters of the sea upon them ; but
the children of Israel went on dry land in the midst
of the sea.

And Miriam, the prophetess, the sister of Aaron,
took a timbrel in her hand ; and all the women went
out after her, with timbrels and with dances. And
Miriam answered them :

“ Sing ye to Jehovah, for he hath triumphed gloriously ;
The horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.”*

Such were the high and holy strains that cele-

* Exodus xiv : xv.

brated the overthrow of the adversaries of the Lord. Pharaoh's race was run. His controversy with God was closed. He had fallen in the mad onset against Omnipotence. He had fallen like an oak of Bashan, or like a cedar of Lebanon before the thunderbolt. And as the sound of his fall rolled in echoes across the desert, surely others would fear. The princes of Edom, the rulers of Moab, the inhabitants of Canaan, all these would tremble at the dire catastrophe and learn to reverence the God of heaven and earth. And so was closed up the controversy of God with the ruler of Egypt,—closed as all other controversies had been closed, not by submission, not by arbitration, not by mercy, but closed on the one hand by unmitigated and stubborn rebellion, and on the other hand by sudden and overwhelming and exterminating vengeance. Every mercy was abused—every respite misimproved, every promise repudiated, every vow violated, every command disregarded, every sign mimicked. Every effort for pacification and adjustment was put forth, but all in vain. Man would not repent, would not yield, would not obey, and so nothing remained but to give up the struggle, and allow the dark tide of revolt to roll on unhindered, or else by measures prompt, speedy and decisive to put an end to their rebellious course. It was done—the Red Sea buried them in her depths, and then vomited them up and rolled them, horses, chariots, king, princes, robes and weapons, upon the

distant shore. Thus was Israel delivered from hard and cruel bondage. Thus was there a lesson taught which has caused the ears of oppressors to tingle wherever it has been told. Thus were judgments executed which magnified God, honored his law, vindicated his government, delivered his people and destroyed his foes.

CHAPTER III.

WITH such an awful manifestation of divine power and justice as was afforded by the overthrow of Pharaoh and his host, we might easily infer that the world, when made acquainted with the facts pertaining to his destruction, would yield at once to the superior claims of God, and cease for ever to interpose themselves as obstacles to the performance of his purposes. Such an inference, however, is unwarranted by analogy and unsustained by *fact*.

Instead of this, those very people who were thus delivered from Egyptian tyranny, were some of them forgetful of the God of their salvation, and rebellious against the rock of their strength. The carcasses that filled the graves of lust, or that rotted in the wilderness during Israel's lengthy sojourn there, are but another indication of the downward proclivity of man, and of his deep-rooted unwillingness to yield appropriate obedience to the God of heaven and earth.

But, leaving Israel for the present, we follow the report of Pharaoh's overthrow, and mark its moral influence upon the inhabitants of adjacent countries.

A judgment so terrible as that inflicted upon Pharaoh could not long remain unknown. The tidings of a deliverance like that vouchsafed to Israel could not be kept secret. The knowledge that this emancipated host were destined to inhabit Canaan, was by no means withheld from the parties interested. It was no secret that Canaan was promised to Israel, or that they were coming to possess it. Long before, Abraham had been informed that when the iniquity of the Amorites was full, his children should return from Egypt and dwell in Palestine.* “When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance—when he separated the sons of Adam—he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel.”† This definite purpose had been announced for hundreds of years. This land, of all the earth, was reserved by Jehovah as his heritage, the abode of his chosen people. The deliverance of Israel from Egypt was a virtual notice to the nations of Canaan to leave the territory in which they had only been tenants at will, until the time of the promise should come. The miracles connected with Israel’s exode were sufficient to convince any who would *reason*, that resistance to Israel and Israel’s God would be alike impious and futile.‡ But they would not receive the lesson. Thus, when the spies, Caleb and Joshua, went up to examine the land, the King of Jericho immediately sent for

* Genesis xv : 13-16. † Deut. xxxii : 8. ‡ Joshua ii : 9-11 ; 24-25.

them, no doubt on purpose to destroy them. The general impression produced upon any whose minds were open to learn the truth, may be inferred from the words of Rahab to the spies:—"I *know* that the LORD hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you. For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites that were on the other side of Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed. And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt; neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the LORD your God, he is God in heaven above and in earth beneath."*

With such convictions as these, resting upon a basis of such stubborn and recent *facts*, there was but one reasonable course for the inhabitants of that land. They should submit, or emigrate from the territory to which others had a prior claim. But they would do neither. The only alternative was to resist the power of Almighty God himself. This they undertook, and in the strength of frail mortality, entered the lists, determined to oppose the will and thwart the purposes of Jehovah. But such endeavors were vain. The arrangements of God cannot be modified by the rebellion of a few wrong-

* Joshua ii: 9-11.

headed men. His counsel shall stand. The car of his purpose must rush along its appointed track. Those who resist, resist at their peril; those who acquiesce have peace. The nations of Canaan resisted—they were overthrown. Their judgment was severe, but justly merited.

There is a certain class of men who, for the sake of covering up their own faults, and excusing their non-compliance with Divine law, or for some similar purpose, take infinite pains to make us believe that the Bible is a fiction, its author a cunning knave, and its God a fiendish monster of cruelty. One of their hackneyed objections to the Bible is this—“Can it be true that a merciful God would destroy the nations of Canaan, as is related in the Old Testament? *We don't believe in such a God.*” Well, let us reason together. Who makes noxious reptiles and venomous insects? The God of *nature*, is it not? Very well, if venomous insects should drive the inhabitants of a country out of her borders, who would be to blame? No one, except the God of nature I suppose! Well, the kings of the Amorites *were* driven out, not with the sword or the bow of Israel, but by swarms of *hornets* which infested the land—sent, Moses says, by Jehovah—infidels would say by the laws of *nature*. Now, what is the difference? These are the recorded *facts*. If God sent the hornets, then it was certainly right for Israel to possess the land—and if *nature* sent them, the case

is not altered one jot that I can discern. In either case their title is equally good, and the cavil is good—for nothing.*

But it is asserted that there were others of the inhabitants of Canaan who afterwards were expelled from its borders by force. This is very true, and to be able to judge of the propriety of the act, we must note a few striking traits in their characters. Among these were the following.

In the first place, they were gross and abominable idolators, who would not worship, obey or serve the Most High God, having perhaps views and conceptions of his character in accordance with those of their modern sympathizers.† Second: they were firm believers in the essential elements of modern “spiritualism,” and practiced *necromancy*, or pretended to divine and reveal secrets by means of intercourse with the departed; and were thus guilty of the abominable practice of leaving the living God to consult dead men.‡ Third: there were many of them who were fully developed “spiritual mediums,” or in ancient phraseology “consulters of familiar spirits,” “diviners,” and “wizards,” who like the “medium” at Endor, professed to bring up dead men for the accommodation of backsliders and God-forsaken rebels like king Saul.§ Fourth: they were,

* Ex. xxiii: 28; Deut. vii: 20; Joshua xxiv: 12.

† Deut. viii: 25. ‡ Lev. xviii: 9-12.

§ Deut. xviii: 11; 1 Sam. xviii: 7.

as it became idolatrous heathens and “progressive” spiritual believers to be, *freed* from the restrictions which God had placed upon the lustful propensities of their nature, and were consequently at full liberty to develop their ideas of “free love” and “passional attraction”: which they did to a perfection which resulted in the most degrading and unnatural sexual connections, even with the very brutes of the field—to say nothing of the vile abominations of Sodomy.* Fifth: their principles of “free love” not only allowed adultery and fornication, but also incest, and all nameless licentious practices of the most revolting character; and quite as *free* as ever I heard of being advocated in any modern spiritual newspaper, or by any speaker in a spiritual convention.† Sixth: they not only begot children in shameless and promiscuous debauchery, but those same children were murderously burned in the fire by their ungodly parents.‡

* Leviticus xviii: 22-24.

† See The New Era, Vol. 1. No. 16, article by “V. C. T.” corresponding editor. Also Speech of Mrs. L——, at the Spiritual Convention, at Ravenna, Ohio, July 4th and 5th, 1857. “To confine her to love one man was an abridgement of her rights....Although she had one husband in Cleveland, she considered herself married to the whole human race. All men were her husbands, and she had an undying love for them. What business is it to the world whether one man is the father of my children, or ten men are!—I have the right to say who shall be the father of my offspring,” &c., &c.

‡ Deut. xii: 31.

These were some of the precious traits of character belonging to that reprobate and besotted race which God destroyed. A race scarcely possessed of one solitary recorded virtue, and not exempt from one single imaginable vice. A race debauched, polluted, licentious, and idolatrous. A race *progressive*, but progressive towards perdition. This was the race of whose presence God purged the world, when their iniquities were *full*. These the men whom the land vomited forth. And if *Israel* had *imitated* their examples, the reddest bolts from Sinai, or the most lurid fires of Sodom, would have been tame compared with the retributive vengeance which would have been visited upon them. But these men—who would have suffered capital punishment in any land where there is to-day the semblance of a decent law—these men, who had forfeited their lives a dozen times—these men who had done ten times more mischief than their necks were ever worth—these men who had seized on one of the fairest spots beneath the sun, and turned it into an ulcerous brothel of whoredom and a den of crime and blood—these ancient murderers of their own children—these heathenish “spiritualists” and “free lovers” of olden times—*these* are the men for whom the gentlemen infidels, spirit-rappers, and Bible haters of the present day, generally, plead. Ah! they pity the poor Canaanites. They blame Moses. They find fault with Joshua. They rail at God. They plead for these villains;

cut-throats, and Sodomites. They palliate the stinking lecherousness of these unholy scoundrels! They, who have learned all they ever knew of God or goodness at their mothers' knee, or from the Bible, the hymn-book, or in the Sabbath-school, rail at Jehovah for wiping out such a plague-spot as this from the universe. Why is all this sympathy? Are they partial to such courses? Are they spiritualists and necromancers? Are they "free lovers" too? Is it "a fellow feeling" that makes them so "wondrous kind?" If so, I excuse their indecent assaults upon God, and truth, and righteousness. But if not, I ask some *reason* why men speak evil of the things that they know not of.

To return, *these* were the men that entered into a controversy with Almighty God. Their efforts were idle. The waters of Jordan receded before their approaching foes; the ramparts of Jericho fell in utter ruin at their presence; the sun and the moon stood still that the work of retribution might go on; the hail from heaven battered their routed legions in the dust; the stars in their courses fought against the enemies of God; all elements combined to effect their overthrow; the ancient river Kishon swept away the fleeing fugitives; and the sword of a righteous avenger exterminated the race.* Thus closed the controversy which God had with the nations of Canaan. It closed as all others have closed,

* Joshua iv: vi. Judges v: 19-21.

not by submission, arbitration, or accommodation ; but by stern judgments which punished the rejection of unnumbered mercies and the vilest prostitution of the best of temporal blessings and favors, and which left on record the same awful lesson which the world had previously refused to learn, that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. It taught man that God's providence would move upon the appointed path of divine purpose and promise, and that those who opposed, opposed to their own destruction. It taught them that a warfare with Jehovah was a most unequal strife, and that man must submit to the divine will or perish in disobedience. This was the lesson written for their instruction—alas that, to the present hour, men should have failed to learn it, and refused to obey it.

CHAPTER IV.

IN noting the progress of governmental opposition to God, we are led a little while by the course of empire, from the shores of the Mediterranean to the plains of Mesopotamia and Assyria. When Nimrod, early in the post-diluvian age, had by his policy and prowess commenced his rule in the land of Shinar, out of that land he went into Assyria and builded Nineveh.* Upon the fertile borders of the Tigris, he laid the foundations of a city and an empire which were destined to eclipse the glory of all previous human undertakings.

Of the rise and early history of the empire thus originated, we know but very little. Ages passed away however, and at length we find it powerful, populous and impious. History represents this city as having a circumference of about sixty miles, and its walls are said to have been one hundred feet high, and were surmounted by fifteen hundred towers, each two hundred feet in height, while the walls themselves were said to be so broad that three chariots might run abreast upon them.† There were said to be in it more than six score thousand persons who could not discern their right hands from their

* Gen. x: 11—marginal reading. † Diodorus Siculus, Book II. c. i

left.* If this included only such as were less than two years old, and if these were only one-twentieth of the whole population, it gives us as a total, some two millions five hundred thousand souls. A city so great must of course manifest very marked moral characteristics. This city in its character was evil. The prophet Jonah was commanded to go and announce to its inhabitants its doom. Its wickedness had come up before the Lord, and his anger was kindled against it. Reluctantly, and only after a vain attempt at disobedience, did the prophet fulfill the command. Then, coming from the cavernous depths of sheol, whence his cry had reached the ear of the eternal one ;—with the slime and weeds of ocean about him, he entered the portals of Nineveh, and trod with trembling step the crowded thoroughfares of that metropolis of the world. Around him were the pilgrims of Mammon gathered from every clime, and the hum and din of traffic and of revelry was on every side. On, on he strode with a burdened and quaking heart, until he had entered the city a day's journey. Standing in its most public places, passing through long avenues of sculptured bulls and lions, surrounded by all the symbols of an impious and debasing idolatry, and by all the tokens of a boundless wealth and conquering might, he lifts up in the ears of peasant and slave, of prince and noble, the prophetic cry " Yet forty days and Nineveh shall

* Jonah iv: 11.

be overthrown !” This was God’s message to those with whom he held solemn controversy for their sins. The word was strange. The accent ; the mournful aspect ; the pathetic cadence ; the earnest gesture, attracted immediate notice. The trembling voice grew firm ; the warning pealed in still deeper notes ; the eye glistened mournfully and gushed with tears ; the crowd were astonished, hushed and alarmed ; and from street to street, from lane to lane, from square to square, rang like the tramp of doom, the solemn message of the prophet, “Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be destroyed.” An unearthly majesty and power was in those words. They weighed heavily on the hearts of those that heard them. The fear of God was not utterly gone. None scoffed at the prophet of the Most High. For once God’s messenger and his message were respected. No abuse or insult as at Sodom or in Egypt ; no indifferent contempt as among the antediluvians was witnessed here. The warning was heeded.

“So the people of Nineveh BELIEVED GOD, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them. For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. And he caused it to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock,

taste any thing ; let them not feed, nor drink water : But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God : yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands. Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not ?”*

The result was as it always has been in the providence of a merciful God. Mercy rejoiced against judgment, and, according to an express principle of the existence of which Jonah was well aware† and which is clearly enunciated in other scriptures, the Ninevites were spared. They had acceded to the Divine requirements, and thus had closed up the controversy by submission to the will of God.

With reference to such circumstances, God has said :—“At *what* instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it : if that nation against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I WILL REPENT of the EVIL that I thought to do unto them. And *at what* instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it ; if it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, that then I WILL REPENT of the GOOD, wherewith I said I would benefit them.”‡

The Ninevites had repented according to the di-

* Jonah iii : 5-9.

† Jonah iv : 2.

‡ Jeremiah xviii : 7-10.

vine mandate ; had turned from their evil way, and from the violence that was in their hands, and notwithstanding the objections of Jonah, who seemed to care more for his own reputation than for God's mercy,—“ God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way ; and God REPENTED of the EVIL that he had said that he would do unto them ; and he did it not.”* Thus the dire calamities were averted, and men learned, by a glad experience, how easy it was for the penitent to find mercy when they sought it of Israel's God. Happy is that people and that nation who thus complies with the divine requisitions, and thus adjusts the controversy that it has waged with God.

But this repentance, though timely, was only temporary. It was not long before the empire relapsed from its brief reformation. That generation passed away, and their successors forgot the solemn warning of the messenger of Jehovah. The lust of power and wealth burned in the breasts of the Assyrian rulers, and wealth and power begat arrogance, cruelty, presumption, and debauchery. The Assyrian which had been a rod in the hands of Jehovah for the chastisement of others, for its own self-sufficiency and pride, was dishonored by Him who beholdeth the proud afar off.† The cruelty and oppression of the rulers, and the cries of afflicted and subjugated nations, reached the ear of God. He had a contro-

* Jonah iii : 10.

† Is. x : 5.

versy with Assyria. After a course of conquest and devastation, Sennacherib, the king, led his army to the gates of Jerusalem, and, as if in utter defiance of God and right, sounded his blasphemous and impudent summons in the ears of the inhabitants, threatening them, in case they dared to offer resistance to his mandate, with a fury from which, as yet, no God had delivered any nation, and from which Jehovah himself would be powerless to deliver those who trusted in him. Full of grief and anguish, Hezekiah, the king, sought divine interposition. The honor of God's name, the sanctity of his temple, the perpetuity of his worship, and the welfare of his chosen people, were all at stake. God heard the prayer, and gave promise of deliverance. The prophet declared that the haughty invader should not shoot an arrow or lift a shield against the city of the Lord. That night, while the Assyrian army was reposing in fancied security, exulting in the prospect of the speedy execution of their blasphemous threats, forgetful of that God with whom they were at war—that *that night* the God of Israel sent forth a single warrior for the protection of endangered innocence, and for the overthrow of an invading host. That warrior, potent in the might of God, accomplished a fearful work. He breathed the blast of death upon the slumbering myriads that lay encamped before Jerusalem; and when the morning broke, there lay one hundred and eighty-five thousand dead corpses

stretched in ghastly silence on the battle plain. Sennacherib had tried the controversy with Jehovah, and he retired from the scene of his boastful blasphemy and discomfiture, and returned and dwelt at Nineveh. There, while engaged in offering adoration to his god Nisroch, he was slain by two of his sons, who fled to Armenia, leaving his son Esarhaddon to occupy the Assyrian throne.*

The subsequent history of Assyria is much of it mingled with fabulous traditions ; but enough remains to enable us to trace the progress of God's controversy with the nation. Some time—perhaps a century and a half—after the solemn warning of Jonah, another Hebrew prophet uttered the curses of God against Nineveh. Vividly does he describe the iniquitous character and condition of that populous metropolis. It was a lion's den—none made them afraid. The den was filled with ravin ; the holes were full of prey ; there was no end of the store of her wealth and pleasant furniture. In her palaces were the treasures of the robbed, and the spoils of the oppressed. She was a well-favored harlot, and nations were sold and ruined by her whoredoms. Her merchants were countless as the stars ; her crowned heads were like locusts ; and her captains like the grasshoppers of the field. Her wickedness had been continually upon all around. Nahum's prophecy is God's war-cry against Nine-

* 2 Kings xix ; Isaiah xxxvi and xxxvii.

veh :—" Woe to the bloody city ! it is full of lies and robbery ; the prey departeth not. The noise of a whip ; and the noise of the rattling of the wheels ; and of prancing horses, and of the jumping chariots."* So he continues to describe the storm of battle beneath which the pride of Assyria should forever sink. God's controversy with the nation was approaching its issue, and this prophetic denunciation was to them the call of another Jonah to repent. But it was unheeded. Their wickedness was deep and determined, and the divine vengeance was to be sudden and irreversible.

Vague and various as are the accounts of different historians, yet we can obtain some evidence as to the overthrow that befell that wicked city. History relates that the rulers of the provinces of Babylon and Media lifted up the standard of revolt against Nineveh. Its monarch, Sardanapalus, was a most infamous voluptuary. Lost in sensual pleasures, he feared not the coming of the avenger. An ancient tradition had declared that Nineveh could not be taken till the river Tigris had turned to be its enemy. And the Hebrew prophet had declared that with an overrunning flood God would make an utter end of the place thereof.† The siege was protracted two years with no special result, but says the heathen historian, Diodorus, The third year it happened that the river "overflowing with continual rains,

* Nahum ii: 11-13; iii.

† Nahum i: 8.

came up into a part of the city, and tore down the wall twenty furlongs in length.”* Thus was the prophecy fulfilled, for “the overrunning flood” had come. Another prophecy remained to be accomplished, “While they be folded together as thorns, and while they are drunken as drunkards, they shall be devoured as stubble fully dry.”† Says the same heathen historian, who relates the occurrence of the flood, “The king hereupon utterly despaired ; and therefore, that he might not fall into the hands of his enemies, he caused a huge pile of wood to be made in his palace court, and heaped together upon it all his gold, silver, and royal apparel, and enclosing his eunuchs and concubines in an apartment within the pile, caused it to be set on fire, and burnt himself and them together.”‡ The invaders took the city, the prophecy was fulfilled, the government subverted, the city brought, by successive blows to heaps and ruins, and for ages, until very recent discoveries, the site of Nineveh was uncertain and unknown. Thus the controversy which God had with Nineveh was closed, closed as all others had been closed, in merited manifestations of divine judgment—closed not by repentance, but by retribution—not by submission, but by destruction—and so the world had another example of the working of that power against which it is useless to contend or to rebel.

* Diodorus Siculus, Book II. c. ii.

† Nahum i : 10.

‡ Diodorus, Book II. c. ii.

We have, in tracing the progress and conclusion of this branch of apostate and rebellious dominion, been led a little in advance of other important events to which we must now return. We take our stand in Palestine, and contemplate the position and behavior of that chosen people who had entered into solemn covenant with God, and who were his special treasure among all the nations of the earth. Let us mark their character, and scan with an observant gaze their changeful and interesting history.

CHAPTER V.

WE behold Israel safely planted in their own beautiful land. Their foes are expelled, their wanderings are over, and they are at rest. God has chosen them to be his people. He has led them from Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. And if they will but obey his voice, then he will be their God forevermore. Every motive, both temporal and spiritual, seemed to incline them to obedience; but yet they did not obey. The record of their early history under their various judges, is but a record of sin, of rebellion, of apostacy, and of consequent punishment, chastisement, and captivity.—This state of things continued until their disaffection became open and general. The rule of God was at length rejected, and a king was desired. Saul was given in anger and removed in wrath, for consulting necromancers and committing crimes similar to those of the Canaanites before him.* To the throne of Israel succeeded the shepherd-boy of Bethlehem—David the son of Jesse, who, after a long and most prosperous reign, gave place to Solomon his son.—Under their consecutive administrations, the king-

* Deut. xviii: 9-14; 1 Sam. xxviii: 7, 8; 1 Chron. x: 13, 14.

dom of Israel reached the acme of its dignity, and the people were most favorably situated for moral and religious development. The kings, though by no means perfect in all things, during a large portion of their reigns ruled in righteousness and in the fear of God. The priests were well instructed, and highly and deservedly honored. The law of God was the law of the land. The nation were blessed with all temporal endowments. They had erected to Jehovah a magnificent temple. There God was continually adored. Within the veil was the ark of his covenant. The shekinal glory illuminated the mercy seat—signs and wonders attested the presence of the Lord—the cloud of Divine splendor bestowed on the temple and tabernacle an unearthly sanctity, and all things united to facilitate the progress of the Israelitish nation in the ways of truth and righteousness. Under these circumstances—in a land which was the glory of all lands—under a government of divine appointment—under the enactments of a Divine legislator—isolated by law, custom, and affinity, from all the surrounding nations—bearing with them the awful memories of the wonders of the Red Sea, and of the land of Egypt, with the miracles of Divine power on every page of their history ; with all the pomp and glory of Sinai and Horeb still in fresh recollection ; with their collective vows of supreme and perpetual fealty to Jehovah but lately made ; with a succession of inspired teachers,—with all these

assisting circumstances we might suppose that this nation would cease to war with God—that the controversy would be closed up, and that *they* would henceforth be a peculiar treasure to the Lord.

Vain anticipation ! Their course was one of revolt from first to last. They followed the abominations of the nations that were cast out before them. Soon the kingdom was divided. Civil war, intestine dissensions, idolatrous practices—persecution of the worshipers of Jehovah, rejection of his law, disregard and profanation of his ordinances, forsaking the living God to consult dead men, seeking after those that had intercourse with familiar spirits—*these* were some of the baleful indications of human apostacy which overspread like leprosy the chosen nation.—Then it was said “The Lord hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood.”* Expostulation proved in vain. They hardened their necks, and made them like an iron sinew, until at length God sent his prophet with this solemn message to Zedekiah, the last king of Jesse’s lineage that ever sat upon the throne of David :† “And thou, profane wicked prince of Israel, whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end, thus saith the Lord God ; Remove the diadem, and take

* Hos. iv : 1-2.

† Ezek. xxi : 25-27.

off the crown : this shall not be the same : exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high. I will overturn, overturn, overturn it : and it *shall be no more*, until HE COME whose RIGHT IT IS ; and I WILL GIVE IT HIM."

This was an overthrow ; though not an utter destruction. For even here, a promise gleams like a bow of hope in the wrathful cloud, reminding us that the overthrow is only till "He come, whose right it is," and God will "give it HIM." All warnings and mercies and entreaties were alike disregarded, and the Jewish nation seemed fully determined to make war with God. They would not obey his voice. They would not yield to his admonition. They would not be at peace with him. And at length the Almighty determined to break up the kingdom as he had predicted by Ezekiel and Jeremiah. The closing chapter of the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel, gives the mournful recital of their sins and of their punishment, as follows :—
"Moreover, all the chief of the priests, and the people, transgressed very much after all the abominations of the heathen ; and polluted the house of the Lord which he had hallowed in Jerusalem. And the Lord God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes and sending ; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling-place : but they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until

the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was NO REMEDY. Therefore he brought upon them the king of the Chaldees, who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man, or him that stooped for age : he gave them all into his hand. And all the vessels of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of the Lord, and the treasures of the king, and of his princes ; all these he brought to Babylon.—And they burnt the house of God, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem, and burnt all the palaces thereof with fire, and destroyed all the goodly vessels thereof. And them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon ; where they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia : to fulfil the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths : for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years.”*

The scene of this controversy changes. Judah’s hearths are desolate, and her altar-fires gone out. Her temple is in ruins, and her beautiful Jerusalem, the City of Peace, is prostrate, with its palaces burned, and its glory departed. Her children are scattered as captives in the dominions of a foreign prince, and under a mighty and oppressive ruler. There by the rivers of Babylon they sat down, and

* 2 Chron. xxxvi: 14-21.

wept when they remembered Zion. They hanged their harps upon the willows that grew by the water-side. They that carried them away captive desired a *song*, and they that wasted them asked of them mirth, saying sing *us* one of the songs of Zion. But their mournful answer was, "How can we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" They could not forget Jerusalem, with its fallen temples—with its prostrate altars—with its ruin and wasteness—and while their city was desolate, and they were captives, how could they sing?* As they thus humbled themselves and drew near to God, he heard their cries, and had now *another* controversy pending even with their proud oppressors. The great and mighty kingdom of Babylon, though it had been the instrument of Jehovah's anger, and the minister of correction to the many nations which were subjected to its sway, was yet limited in its duration and circumscribed in its operations by the will of the omnipotent One. Those limits were transcended. The power which God gave for a time they claimed forever—that power which he gave for purposes of correction they used for purposes of self-aggrandizement and worldly ambition. Wealth and independence culminated in pride and impiety. God had a controversy with Babylon and its ruler. Though warned by divine admonitions, and solemnly instructed by Daniel that he could only hope for a

* Psalm cxxxvii.

lengthening of his tranquillity by showing mercy to the poor, and breaking off his sins by righteousness; only twelve months had elapsed before the king, while walking in his palace, spoke and said, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honor of my majesty? While the word was yet in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven: O King Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; the kingdom is departed from thee. And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men and giveth it to whomsoever he will."* Seven years of beastly humiliation did their work of reformation upon the king. He returned to his kingdom and his throne a changed man. He was made to stand upon his feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to him.† He praised and honored the overruling God of heaven and earth, and extolled the King of heaven whose providence had so signally subdued his pride.‡ Henceforth he ruled in humility and ceased to war against the Lord.

But another monarch arose and under him the controversy with God was continued. He carried his impiety to the greatest heights. His crowning

* Dan. iv. 29-32.

† Dan. vii. 4.

‡ Dan. iv. 34-37.

act was at a splendid and voluptuous festival, during which he called for the golden vessels of the house of God, and with his wives and concubines, prostituted them as utensils of riotous debauchery and idolatrous adoration. The same hour a mysterious hand recorded his doom upon the palace wall. His kingdom was numbered and finished. He was weighed in the balances and found wanting; and his kingdom was divided and given to the Medes and Persians.*

For a long time these sanguinary nations, under a skillful and intrepid leader, had been waiting beneath the impregnable walls of Babylon, as the ready ministers of predetermined vengeance. At length the appointed time arrived. The waters of the Euphrates were diverted from their channel, and on that night of feasting and riot, just as the impiety of the Babylonian monarch disclosed itself in idolatrous desecration and profane debauchery, the besieging army entered the river's channel, at its point of ingress to and egress from the city; and marching through its bed, issued into the city from the gates leading to the river, which drunken guards had left unlocked. Instantly the streets were filled with armed hosts.† One post ran to the palace with tidings that the city was taken at one end; another met him from the opposite extremity with the same intelligence.‡ The roar of battle resounded in the

* Daniel v. † Herodotus, Book I, chap. 191. ‡ Jeremiah li : 31.

broad places of Babylon ; the gleam of swords, the clash of spears, the twang of bowstrings, and the rattle of arrows, all told of divine vengeance inflicted upon the oppressive city. Roused from his feast, the king rushed to the palace gate, sword in hand ; but the tide of battle was too strong for him to stem. The same night was Belshazzar, the king, slain—his drunken nobles slept the sleep of death, pierced by their conquerors' weapons of war. Darius, the Median, took the kingdom, and the pride and splendor of that mighty dynasty were past forever.* God had put a check upon the *controversy*, had stained the pride of human glory, and had learned the Babylonians how vainly they endeavored to contend with his purpose and his providence. In this striking account of the overthrow of Babylon, the analogies are observed to be entirely similar to those of all the previous stages in this great controversy of God with the nations of the earth.

It was closed, not by mercy, but by judgment ; not by submission, but by destruction. Power had been abused, prosperity had begotten impiety, admonitions had been disregarded, examples had been forgotten, and it needed another out-flashing of the sword of justice, to hush for a little the tumult of rebellion, and show that there lived a Ruler who was over all, and who mocked at their counsels, and derided their puny and rebellious pride. That God they had

* Dan. v : 30-31.

chosen to resist ; they had entered the controversy with him ; they refused to yield : they perished !

Nearly two hundred years before, while Babylon stood, in its impregnable grandeur, the harlot city of Chaldea ; God's prophet had denounced its doom ; a doom that required generations ere it *began* to be accomplished, and ages for its full accomplishment ; but which now, at a distance of more than twenty-five hundred years, stands out fulfilled before the world so literally and circumstantially, that among all the boasted oracles of antiquity it will be impossible to obtain an instance that will compare with this. Said the prophet of Jehovah :—"And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation ; neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there ; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there : but wild beasts of the desert shall lie there ; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures ; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there. And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces : and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged."*

Thus Ichabod was written upon the palaces of the golden city. The controversy reached its issue ; the

* Isaiah xiii : 19-22.

prophetic denunciation was accomplished ; the majesty of an Almighty Ruler was made manifest ; and the fairest hopes of revolted and heaven-defying mortals were forever frustrated.

Another nation ruled. The Median and Persian governments were consolidated in one mighty empire, which, erected upon the ruins of the Babylonian monarchy, was destined yet to play an important part upon the theatre of mortal action.

But though the night of judgment closed in darkness upon the proud rulers of Chaldea, the morning broke sweetly upon the weeping captives, who hanged their harps upon the willows in the midst of the captured city. Their liberation was ensured. The Lord stirred up the spirit of the Persian monarch to proclaim deliverance to the captives, and the opening of prison doors to them that were bound. Under the direction of their appropriate leaders, the Jews took up their march from the land of bondage to the home of their fathers. Again the long-desolate villages were restored and inhabited ; the city was builded on the holy hill ; the streets and walls were finished in troublous times ; and the temple once more crowned its lofty eminence. Its service was restored, its altar-fires relighted, its offerings slain, its law rehearsed, and over its sanctuary was hung that mysterious veil which was to remain until the glory of the latter house should exceed that of the former, in the consummation and fulfillment

of its typical arrangements, and until, by a more perfect way, and through a more excellent veil, the faithful of every nation should approach a more glorious mercy seat, and by faith draw nigh to God. Judah had become penitent, and God had heard her penitential cry; the fires of inspiration enkindled the lips of her prophets, the blessings of temporal prosperity abode within her gates, and the beautiful sunlight of divine favor sat sweetly upon the countenance of the once captive, but now ransomed daughter of Zion.

The world without pursued its accustomed course. The Persian monarchy grew cruel and rapacious, even like those which had gone before it. The story of its rise and its expansion, of its crimes and its subjugation, illustrates the principles which we have been enforcing. By the instrumentality of an obscure Grecian kingdom, from which arose the mighty Alexander, God at length overthrew the Persian monarchy; and the Grecian was established upon its ruins. Persia, like Babylon before it, had been weighed in the balances of divine justice, and found wanting in those qualities which Jehovah required in the rulers of the earth. God had proved the haughty nation with dominion, and they were found unworthy of the important trust. Hence they fell, and other rulers took the sceptre. And their fall was not fortuitous, or unforeseen. The prophets' eye had beheld, and the prophets' pen had recorded, the

doom of Persia, and the agency by which its overthrow was to be effected, long before the event occurred. In the eighth chapter of Daniel we find that the Persian and Grecian empires are designated by appropriate beastly symbols. While the Persian monarchy was standing in the stateliness of its power, like its chosen emblem, 'the ram,' Grecia, like 'a rough he-goat,' sent her warriors to the fray. The conflicts between the rival armies were few but terrible. The overthrow of Darius was speedy and final. Alexander was a conqueror; Persia was prostrate; and Grecia was thenceforth the dominant power of earth. In the hands of the Grecian conqueror, that power which he received by divine purpose, was, as usual, abused. Alexander did not acknowledge Jehovah as his God. Though the prophets of Israel had minutely depicted his triumphant career, yet he still rendered homage to the idol gods around. He ruled unjustly. He lusted after conquest, and gratified his lust by invading the peaceful and overcoming the weak. He grew tyrannical, and was inflated with pride. He even sought to be adored as a God by his fellow-men. He, in rage and intemperance, murdered his friend by his own hand. He gave his strength to strange women. He was mighty to mingle strong drink. He tarried long at wine.

At last he stood amid the grandeur and magnificence of Babylon. Of its decaying splendor much remained. He strove to arrest the process of disso-

lution. He proposed, contrary to the divine purpose, to restore its departed glory and make it mighty, when God had pronounced it base. There are many devices in the heart of man, but the counsel of the Lord that shall stand. The counsel of the Lord concerning Babylon was declared. The devices of Alexander opposed that counsel. His puny arm strove to throw back those events of providence which rushed in majestic grandeur along their predestined way. He failed. He looked upon the wine when it was red—he drank until the serpent's bite and adder's sting were in all his being. He was crazed by the fever of wine, and he slept the sleep of death. Bacchus took away his crown—nay, Jehovah stained thus the pride of his glory, and brought into contempt all the honorable of the earth. Broken and plucked up, the "horn" of Grecian power was no more. Children and wives had Alexander, but jealousies came in among them. One was idiotic through the poison of another, one was assassinated through the treachery of another—ambition and lust of dominion performed their work, and in fifteen years the race of Alexander was extinct—none were left to bear his name, or wear his honors ; or, with filial affection, to revere his memory. Such is human grandeur. So passed like a bubble the glory of the mightiest warrior that earth had seen. Fifteen years of time's ebbing and flowing blotted out his dynasty, and destroyed his progeny from the face of the earth.

His four generals, who had been his companions in toil and conflict, distributed among themselves those honors and emoluments for which there remained no acknowledged claimants. Precisely in accordance with the forewritten prediction of Daniel, the kingdom was divided into four sections. Four other "horns" of power "came up towards the four winds." Lysimachus had Thrace and Asia Minor in the northern regions ; Selucus had Syria and Babylon in the east ; Ptolemy founded a southern dynasty in Egypt ; while Cassander had Greece and the neighboring countries in the west. Thus passed away that great government, subsiding into a number of antagonistic and self-destructive powers, which maintained a mutual strife until at length the strongest devoured the weakest, and they, in their turn, succumbed beneath the mighty hand of the Iron Kingdom of the west, the haughty empire of the Romans.

For some seven centuries the city of the robbers upon the Tiber, had been aspiring after dominion. And now at last God had said : "Give the scepter to the Romans and let them reign." It was done. Syria and Egypt, the last remaining divisions, yielded to the Romans, the former being conquered by Pompey, the latter surrendered to Cæsar. Rome was now the incarnation of political power. Rome was the mistress of the world. Rome had received the ensigns of dominion, and with them the solemn re-

sponsibilities which their reception entailed. But Rome was recreant to her trust. She stole the liberties of the world. She mocked the claims of God. She worshiped all else save him. Thus she rose and triumphed—mighty in guilt, and sin, and transgression. She assumed and maintained the previous controversies with God. She would not bate one jot of her claims for his law; nor yield in the least her dignity to his majesty. Hence the controversy stood unsettled, and the breach was widening all the time. So far from obeying God, they would not know him, but filled his throne with idols and abominations, to which they offered incense and adoration.

Israel too, by this time, demanded attention. They had been restored from the spoilers land, but they had not learned righteousness. They forgot the wonders of divine power, and the manifestations of divine mercy. They remembered not his works of old. They were corrupted by the nations about them. The Pharisees drank from the turbid currents of oriental philosophy. The Sadducees rushed to an opposite and dangerous extreme. The elders encumbered the law with multitudinous traditions. The scribes taught the way of obedience but refused to walk in it. The poor were oppressed and the proud called happy. God was robbed in tithes and in offerings. The prophets prophesied falsely, the priests bore rule by their means, and the multitude were pleased with the course they pursued. Few were

zealous for the Lord of Hosts. Few were earnest in the rebuke of iniquity. Few sought unto God and strove to be at peace with him. Gentile iniquity and Jewish rebellion were reaching an awful pitch. The controversy with Israel and the nations was yet unsettled. No progress had been made towards an universal adjustment. The quarrel was undecided, and man was unsubmissive. The vineyard of God had brought forth deadly berries. He had uprooted and replanted the vine, and now the husbandmen gave him no fruit—the vine-dressers yielded him no returns for his labor. So the dark tide of oppression and ungodliness rolled down to death. The hearts of men were estranged from God, and hence the embittered controversy showed no tokens of adjustment. The prophets of Israel had been slain, but the nation now built them gorgeous tombs, and while they honored their fame, they violated their precepts—cast aside their examples, and persecuted their successors and followers. Iniquity abounded—faith was weak, worship formal, and service hypocritical; while transgression was constant, and unrighteousness steadfast.

CHAPTER VI.

WHEN all the world thus lay buried in wickedness and guilt, Jehovah interfered, in the accomplishment of a long-determined purpose for the salvation of man, and the adjustment of the great controversy. He sent forth his Son into the world, born in the likeness of sinful flesh. The angels were full of rapture at this sight, which was a fresh proclamation of God's good will to his enemies. So, while the celestial choir wheeled in glorious ranks above the plains of Bethlehem, they sang first—"Glory to God in the highest," and then, "On earth peace and good will to men." This was the Messiah's errand to the world: To restore *peace* between God and his revolted province, to decide the great controversy, and to reconcile all things to God. He came, the accredited Messenger from heaven to earth; he came, the one Mediator between God and man; he came, the great Ambassador, with messages of reconciliation to a fallen race; he came, giving all mankind the offers of his favor. And God wondrously prepared the world for his coming. The passions of men were held in check, and the closing of the tem-

ple of Janus at Rome gave such a token of political quiet as had only occurred thrice in a period of more than seven hundred years. The world, too, were in expectation of the coming of a mighty one. The Gentiles had imbibed this wide-spread impression, and the Jews especially were warned to anticipate the advent of their Prince. In the wilderness of Judea, a moral giant heralded the coming of the greater Proclaimer of the divine will, and exhorted the nation to repent, and by reformation, prepare for the approaching manifestation of a mightier one, and one much more worthy than was he. Multitudes heeded the proclamation, and were baptized of John in Jordan, confessing their sins, and thus seeking a reconciliation to their Creator's will.

And now, if the world will accept of the Messenger of the Divine Covenant; if they will listen to his proposals for an adjustment of this controversy; if they will war against God no longer, and disobey his commands no more; if they will accept of conditions advantageous and reasonable, and, ceasing to war against God, will obey his commands, then the controversy will be at an end, the difficulty over, and the race can once more walk in the sunlight of the Divine favor.

But how did earth receive its Saviour? How did the *Jews*—his own peculiar nation; his kindred; his subjects—receive him? When, after sore temptations of Satan; after the testimony of John, and

the witness of the voice from heaven, accompanied by the descending Spirit of the Holy One, he stood up in the synagogue at Nazareth as the Messenger of good tidings, and the anointed Comforter of all that mourned, they for a little while "wondered at his gracious words," and then, filled with wrath, they thrust him out of the synagogue, and dragged him toward a frightful precipice, that they might hurl him down headlong and destroy him. They hated him without a cause. They slandered and belied him without justice or mercy. They denied him the possession of any virtue; they falsely accused him of almost every vice; they taunted, and derided, and reproached him; they watched and spied his discourses; they vainly thought to entangle him in his talk; they accused him of gluttony, of intemperance, of Sabbath-breaking, of transgression, and of blasphemy; they made his works of mercy occasions of renewed accusations, and they sought to kill those who were living monuments of his quickening power; they plotted against him in secret, they slandered him in their councils, and they railed on him openly. For his friends, he must needs seek the Gallilean fishermen or the despised tax-gatherers: he must suffer hunger in the midst of plenty, and have not where to lay his head in a world which was his rightful heritage. They treated him as an impostor; they cried and clamored for his death, and coveted the release of a robber rather than the deliverance

of God's holy Ambassador to man. Thus did the Jews reject both the message and the messenger of God, and their rejection was their ruin.

How did the Gentiles receive him? At first, in his infancy, they sought his life, and afterwards, in his manhood, they took it. They broke in upon the speechless agony of his midnight prayer, with the flash of their torches and the tramp of their armed bands. They led him in mockery about the streets of Jerusalem for many a weary hour. They bound his temples with the twisted thorn. They beat him cruelly with their hands. They arrayed him in a gorgeous robe—blind-folded him, and bade him prophecy unto them. They drew his blood with the gory scourge. They gave him a reed for a sceptre, and cried in mockery, "Hail, King of the Jews."—They delivered him up to the clamor of the Jews, even while he was shown to be innocent of any crime. They laid his cross upon him, and led him forth to execution. They drove the nails through his quivering, bleeding flesh. They hung him in ignominy between two thieves. They watched him there—Jews derided him, Pharisees and priests wagged their heads contemptuously at his dying agonies—Gentiles gave him vinegar to drink, and cast lots for his garments beneath his cross. Jews rejoiced to see him expire—a Roman pierced his side, and out of it came a stream which has been health to the heart-broken ever since. Romans watched his sepulchre

while dead ; they sealed it with a Roman seal, and when he rose, both Jews and Romans agreed to lie about his resurrection, and both Jews and Romans persecuted to the bitter death those who afterwards maintained his cause, and bore witness to the truth of God concerning him.

Thus the *world* received God's Messiah. No sooner had he unfolded his message than they sent up to God an universal hiss of contempt and rage. Satan himself could not have planned a reception more in accordance with hate, and wrath, and wrong. No sooner had he presented, and urged his claims, than the Jews cried out, "We will not have this man to reign over us." "We have no king but Cæsar." "Away with him, away with him ! crucify him, crucify him !" "Not this man, but Barrabas." "His blood be upon us and upon our children."—And this was the world's welcome to him who came to reconcile them to God ! This the greeting that they extended to the celestial visitant, over whose advent all heaven resounded with rapturous song, and into the mysteries of whose glorious work angels desired to look. Every insult was heaped upon him. Every honor was denied him ; until at length he turned away from the race that had refused his mediation, and leaving behind him a few chosen but humble friends, he retired from a rejecting and despising world, and ascended to a more congenial clime, there to enjoy the glory that he had with the Father

before the world was.* Earth rejected Christ, but heaven received him ; and with him a glorious multitude of captives† whom he had delivered from the grasp of death, and borne upward as a kind of first fruits of a future and glorious harvest, which he proposed to gather eventually from earth to the garner of the Most High.

The personal efforts of Messiah failed to adjust the controversy between God and the arrogant sons of men. Haughty and hardened, the kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers took counsel together, against the Lord and against his anointed.‡ And it was a marvel of divine forbearance that God did not at this time break forth in wrath upon the abusers, and rejecters, and murderers of his Son—and thus consign them all to speedy, utter, and irrevocable ruin. But such was not the Divine purpose. God had richer tokens of his infinite mercy to his enemies, and he still persisted in efforts to reconcile man unto himself. And though human indignation would in such a case hurl forth, at such offenders, bolts red with uncommon wrath, yet Divine mercy and long-suffering still continued to be exercised. God sent his sunshine on the very men that pierced his well-beloved Son ; and caused the rain to fall upon the very land that had been the scene of the

* Mark xvi: 19 ; Luke xxiv: 51 ; Acts vii: 55 ; John xvii: 5.

† Ephesians iv: 8—margin ; Matt. xxvii: 52-53.

‡ Psalms ii ; Acts iv: 24-28.

Saviour's suffering and ignominy. Nay, so far from executing vengeance on them, he left chosen witnesses to testify of his love to fallen and revolting humanity, and commanded them to begin at Jerusalem* their testimonies of his free and boundless love.— There, where they clamored for his life ; there, where they mocked him as he died ; must the gospel *first* be preached. And so it was. For to those whose hands were red with his blood ; to those who had been the betrayers and murderers of “the just One” ; to those who “killed the Prince of Life” ; was the “word of salvation” sent first of all ; when the pentecostal baptism was upon the apostles of Jesus, and when they were endowed with power from on high.† Many heard with gladness the word, and entered into covenant with the Lord, through the blood of him upon whom their iniquities had been laid. But though some believed, the multitude still continued to despise Christ and transgress against the Most High God.

When Jesus the Messiah left a world which had been so unmindful of his teachings and his favors, he left not himself without a witness on the earth. To a few faithful ambassadors he committed the offers of that sovereign mercy which the world had rejected at his hands ; and he required of them that they should, at whatever hazard, publish those offers among all the nations of the earth. Like lambs

* Luke xxiv : 47. † Acts ii : 22, 23.

among wolves, he sent forth his disciples, to declare his mercy ; strengthening them with might by his spirit in the inner man ; endowing them with power from on high ; encouraging them by blessed words of hope ; and cheering them with the assurance that he was with them always, even to the end of the world ; and that whatever might be their tribulations here, their obedience to him should receive the rewards of an endless life, and the resplendent honors of a never fading crown.*

Leaving his followers thus to propose peace to the disobedient ; breaking down the middle walls of partition between the separated nations, concluding all, both Jews and Gentiles, under sin, that he might have mercy upon all ; promising his powerful spirit to assist his messengers to perform their work ; he obeyed a voice that said “come up higher,” and ascended and sat at God’s own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power, and every name that is named, both in heaven and earth ; and having all power in heaven and in earth delivered into his hands, he there remains from henceforth expecting till his enemies shall be made his footstool ;† and the controversy between God and man shall be definitely, and finally adjusted. Jehovah had beheld the warring strife of earth, and

* Eph. iii : 16. Luke xxiv : 49. Math. xxviii : 20. Math. xix : 27-29. 1 Pet. v : 1-4. † Eph. ii : 14. Rom. xi : 32. Eph. i : 19-23. Math. xxviii : 18. Heb. x : 12, 13.

foreseen the rejection of his anointed Messiah, and he had said to him, "Sit thou at my right hand till I make thine enemies thy footstool."* And there he yet abides, for we see not yet all things put under him.† An exile from his purchased heritage, he beholds it the prey of cruel men and of savage beasts ; a theatre of blood, and strife, and carnage ; an abode of impiety and blasphemy ; a haunt of rebellion, sin, and shame ; where the few that stand as his representatives, receive for their fidelity the malice of the many who spurn his authority ; and who in defiant wrath wage war against the King of Kings.

The apostles went forth to execute their mission. And how were *they*, the ambassadors of Christ, received ? How did the Jews receive them ? They rejected their authority. They forbade them to exercise their office. They accused them falsely. They straitly charged them, under grievous penalties, to cease to speak in the name of Jesus. They scourged them publicly. They placed them like felons in the prisons of Jerusalem. They stoned them for their faithful testimonies ; they killed them uncondemned, save by the blind fury of a lawless mob. They persecuted them even to strange cities. They stirred up tumults against them, while they sought to worship God. The rulers gave to mad zealots their official authority for the work of devastation. They

* Ps. cx.

† Heb. ii : 8.

drove them from their homes in Jerusalem, and compelled them to flee to other regions. They had killed their own prophets, and now they persecuted the apostles ; they feared not God and were contrary to all men.* They filled up the cup of their iniquity, and offered their blasphemous insults to that God whom they had vowed to obey, whose name they still hypocritically retained ; but whose laws they violated, and whose glory they deeply disgraced.

God had a controversy with Judah. Their sin was written as with a diamond point. They had rejected the last message of God's mercy, sent to them by the messenger of the everlasting covenant. The husbandmen had killed the heir to gain the heritage. The citizens had not only despised the invitation to the marriage-feast, but had slain the servants who brought it to their ears.† They had forgotten the wrath which had been kindled against their nation in other years. They sat secure. They feared not the sayings of the Nazarene, nor the threatenings of their own neglected prophets.— They had a controversy with Jehovah. They would not seek to adjust it. They were reckless of results. They defied the hand that had been their help.— They profaned the name which had been their trust.

God's controversy with them approached its issue.

* Acts iv : v : vi : vii : viii chapters. 1 Thess. ii : 14-16.

† Math. xxi : 33-45. Math. xxii : 1-13.

The chosen seed—which, like the new wine in the cluster, had long preserved the whole—had now been brought forth.* The nation had been already broken off from any special spiritual relation to God, while Gentiles, like wild olive branches, were grafted in. The sentence of moral excision had been pronounced. “Lo ammi”—“not my people,” was said by God of those who had been his people.† They had broken the marriage covenant, though he was an husband to them. He had divorced them, and sent them away with the shame of adultery resting upon them; and while rejecting them, had called his servants by another name.‡ But now another calamity must come upon them. They had so far defied the Almighty, that now he determined to lay heavily upon them his chastening hand; to crush that outbreaching wickedness which was kindled in the city which was called by his name; and to blot out, in blood and flame, the mad opposition of those who professed to be his friends, but were in truth his inveterate foes.

Woful was the day when Israel hardened their neck against God! Dire were the calamities which they thus entailed upon themselves! God brought against them the messengers of his indignation.

Again the predictions of divine wrath, long-uttered, and conditioned upon the conduct of Israel, gleamed

* Isaiah lxxv: 8-10.

† Rom. xi: 17-23; Hosea i: 9.

‡ Hosea ii: 3; Is. lxxv: 15.

like bolts of vengeance above a devoted race. Precisely as was predicted, the calamity came. God brought against them the Romans from far, from the end of the earth, swift as the eagle's flight ; a nation of a strange and unknown language—a nation fierce of countenance, which neither regarded the old nor showed favor to the young. They plundered and pillaged the surrounding country ; they besieged them in all their gates, until their walls were prostrate and their cities taken.* The chosen city of God, beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, was devoted to a terrible destruction. The followers of Jesus, seeing it compassed with armies, fled to the mountains, according to their Master's admonition, and were safe.† But the thronging sons and daughters of Judah gathered within the city's walls. Their enemies laid siege to them ; and cast mounds against them ; and dug a trench about them ; and sought to execute all the fierce anger which Judah had enkindled against themselves. The terrors of that siege I need not attempt to delineate. They are written on the dark page that records the destruction of those who rebel against the Most High. The fury of the assaults ; the valor of the defence ; the steady courage of the Roman legions, and the fierce and furious rage of the despairing Jews—all these need not now be recounted. God brought to pass his strange act of judgment and of

* Deut. xxviii : 48-52. † Luke xxi : 20-21. See Eusebius' Ec. Hist.

punishment. Not one of his threatenings fell to the ground unfulfilled.

In the starvation that ensued, the tender and delicate woman, who would not set the sole of her foot upon the ground, was compelled by hunger to kill and devour her own children; and others sought to participate in the horrid repast with a greediness which caused relatives to quarrel for the flesh of their friends.* And after all the unparalleled sufferings of the siege, the city was taken, the houses rifled, the women ravished, the temple overthrown, the tabernacle burned, the palaces broken down, the buildings destroyed, the walls prostrated, the city desolate, and the nation of Jehovah's choice was scattered to the winds of heaven. The whirlwind of righteous fury descended upon them; the storms of desolating wrath were let loose, and the nation which had rejected Jehovah's counsel and madly rushed on to controversy with God, perished in their vain attempt, and were driven like the chaff of the mountains before the wind, and like a thistle-down before the whirlwind. So closed, for the time, the controversy of God with his rebellious people. It closed not by peace but by war—not by mercy but by judgment. Humanity had done its worst, and the outflashing of divine indignation was demanded by the exigencies of human depravity. Since that time Israel as strangers have wandered with weary feet in every

* Deut. xxviii: 53-57.

land ; have abode without a king or prince or teraphim for many days,* have borne the stumbling block of their iniquity ; have left their name for a curse to the world ; have been a hissing and a by-word among all nations ; have looked vainly for rest and have wept for the land of their ancient glory ; while Jerusalem itself has been trodden down of the Gentiles, and will be until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.† Yet there is in divine mercy one hope for fallen Israel. If they continue not in unbelief, God is able to graft them in ; and so by the ingathering of the chosen remnant, the bringing in of all who seek unto the Lord, all Israel shall be saved—saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation.

And to the Gentile Church their example furnishes a most solemn and impressive lesson. Because of unbelief they were broken off, and now thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear. For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. Behold, therefore, the goodness and severity of God : on them which fell severity ; but towards thee goodness, if thou continue in his goodness : OTHERWISE THOU ALSO SHALT BE CUT OFF.‡

* Hosea iii : 4. † Luke xxi : 24. ‡ Romans xi : 14-24.

CHAPTER VII.

WHEN the Gospel of God had been rejected with indignant scorn by the Jews, then the apostles said, "Lo, we turn unto the Gentiles."* They did so, and bore to them the message of reconciliation which Israel had so steadfastly despised. Some believed and were saved, both Jews and Greeks. But the multitudes—how did they receive the new and glorious light which had flashed from heaven across their paths? They treated it with contempt. They called its messengers "babblers," and its truths "foolishness." They persecuted the servants of God. They bound them with chains "for the hope of Israel." They beat them with scourges and rods, openly and uncondemned. They locked them in prisons with their feet fast in the stocks. They flung them to wild beasts, or delivered them to be executed by still more cruel men. They burned them to light the gardens of the imperial monster who sat in the throne of the Cæsars. They tormented them with many grievous tortures. They drove them from the abodes of men. They banished them to toil and labor in the mines. They condemned them to the fate

* Acts xiii: 46.

of the worst of criminals. The Christians thus became, through satanic malice, the filth of the world and the offscouring of all things. The bearing of Christ's name was an offence worthy of death. They buried themselves in the dark recesses of the Roman catacombs, to seek there, in the home of the dead, that security which they were denied among the abodes of the living. They fled to distant lands, to wild inhospitable climes, to gain there a refuge from the storm of satanic fury that burst upon them from every centre of human power and government.

Still, in all their persecutions, they trusted in the living God. They labored, and suffered reproach. The records of the steadfast faith of some have floated down to us; but the vast host have their story in the "Book of Remembrance," and their names in "the Book of Life." All hail, ye noble saints of the Most High! Peace to your ashes! And may the day soon come when ye shall wear your undecaying glories in the saint's sweet home!

We have seen how the world refused to accept of the messages of God, and adjust the long-pending controversy with their Maker. The world that had crucified the Master, had no mercy on his servants. Him they called Baalzebub; them they treated with equal abuse. But by-and-bye the name of Christ was honored. The Church first loved the world, and then the world loved the Church. The professors of Christianity then were honored, and religion sat

in coquettish dalliance with the great and mighty of earth. The world did not reform, but the Church apostatized. Nay, the true Church of God yet lived, and God had reserved still to himself the chosen remnant that had "not bowed the knee to Baal." The world loved not them. *They* were not its honors. They confessed themselves pilgrims and strangers; and though despised as enthusiasts, or reproached as heretics, they kept before a gainsaying world the facts of human alienation from God, and the conditions of human reconciliation to him.

But things grew worse and worse. The dalliance of an unfaithful bride became, in time, the shameless wantonness of the undisguised harlot. Other beings than God were worshiped; other mediators besides Christ were invoked; others than the Most High were adored. The operation of the hidden leaven of "malice and wickedness" had gone on till almost "the whole was leavened." The wise took away the key of knowledge, and the people perished for the lack thereof. Men were taught to obey others rather than the Lord. The flock were driven to follow evil shepherds, and bade to climb up into the fold some other way. Men were taught to propitiate God with paltry gold, and permitted to retain their sins while they parted with their money. The world sat in darkness, and the harlot trod out almost all the light that glimmered amid the gloom. So the Church were tried, and troubled, and dis-

tressed on every side. Those were evil times—days of peril to the flock of God. The truths of God were hidden beneath countless fables. The commandments of God were made void through man's tradition. The word of God was sealed, prohibited, perverted, and mutilated ; and the ages of darkness rolled in upon the world. To reveal God's proposals for peace was a crime ; to publish that God had a controversy with all sinners, and to point out the divine method of adjusting it, was to imperil every earthly good, and even life itself.

The few faithful messengers of Jehovah were hunted and driven, with persistent cruelty, from the abodes of comfort and of peace. They were stoned ; they were sawn asunder ; they wandered in deserts and in mountains—in dens and caves of the earth. Of them the world was not worthy ; and yet they were accounted as the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things, for the sake of Him who sent them to preach peace and salvation to the revolted and the perishing.

God had, in his own time, brought punishment and destruction upon the empire of the Cæsars. Judgments had been poured out like vials of wrath. Barbarian hordes had broken in upon its ancient grandeur, and rolled the tide of war and blood across her fertile plains and beautiful valleys. Power, long prostituted to unholy ends, had been taken away. The sceptre of abused dominion had been wrested

from the Roman's hand, and ten other powers had risen up like so many horns of cruelty upon the head of a ferocious beast of prey.* The wars and tumults and commotions which ensued, furnished all needful opportunities for the exercise of priestly craft, ecclesiastical usurpations, and unholy alliances with the dominant powers around. Thus the harlot allured all with her charms, and with an enchantress' smile, made them drunken from her golden cup, while she became intoxicated with a more terrible potion, and was "drunken with the blood of saints" and martyrs of the Lamb.† So she revelled in her shameless wantonness and adulterous lust. But the bride of Christ sat in darkness. She trod a weary waste. She scattered her tears over the promises of her absent Bridegroom's return, and nourished, with her own blood, the faith that was ready to die. And when these ages of darkness closed in, and she fled from the haunts of men; when impiety was most dreadful among those who named the name of Christ; when the traitors to God were more deadly in their hate than his open foes—then God brought chastisements upon them. The "scourge of God" had fallen upon imperial Rome, and hurled it into ruin and desolation; and now another calamity must come upon those who were engaged in revelry with the harlot, and who worshiped the power that upheld her.

* Dan. vii: 8-24.

† Rev. xvii: 1-6.

God would not permit the tide of idolatry to roll on thus unchecked. His messenger of wrath, had denounced the *woe* of God's displeasure against the dwellers on the earth; and the herald "trumpet" of divine providence, sounded the clangor of impending doom.

To the false prophet of Mecca there was given power to unlock the dark abyss, from whose depths rolled forth the deep and ominous shadows of approaching wrath. From the lurid and baleful fires of fanaticism which he engendered and unloosed, there came forth a host countless as the locusts, poisonous as the very scorpions, whose mission was, not to devour the grass and herbs of earth, but to destroy and afflict those who bore not the seal of God upon their foreheads.* Most minutely did the prophet depict this locust-like horde of Mohammedan horsemen, with their gorgeous crown-like turbans; their streaming hair, their iron breast-plates, and the rattling of their armor like the distant hum of locusts' wings, or like the rush of armed hosts. Behind

* "Destroy no old women or children; cut down no palm trees nor fruit trees; burn no corn fields; kill no cattle except for your own use; slay no religious persons in the monasteries, nor injure their places of worship; but give no quarter to the synagogue of Satan, except they either embrace Islamism, or consent to pay tribute." Directions given by ABUBEKR, the successor of MAHOMET, to YEZID the commander of an expedition against Syria, A. D. 633. Vide Hales' Chronology, vol. iii. p. 352. How accurate the fulfillment of Rev. ix: 3-5!

them came the scorpion sting of desolation, tribute, oppression and perdition ; while before them went a king whose very name or title of " Destroyer " told but too plainly the character of his work.*

Like an overrunning and devouring throng did these armies go forth to work deserved vengeance upon the apostate and idolatrous races. And their power was felt. They burst like the woe of God upon the perverters of his worship, and the despisers of his law. They trembled with terror at the dire infliction, and shuddered at the war cry of the followers of the false prophet. A few saw in these calamities the hand of God afflicting an apostate and ungodly people. " The surprising success of the *Saracens* over the *Christians*, though so much superior in number and discipline, was thus accounted for by a pious officer to the emperor *Heraclius* : ' The Greeks have been everywhere worsted by the Arabs, because they have for a long time walked unworthy of their Christian profession : they have corrupted their holy religion, injured and oppressed one another, been guilty of fornication, and fomented divisions and animosities among themselves.' "† At length the Saracenic scourge abated ; they rested from their invasive warfares and settled down in the quietude of more polished life. But the world learnt no wisdom from the tribulations

* Rev. ix : 1-11.

† *Theophanes* Chronograph. p. 276. Hales' Chron. vol. iii. p. 356.

that they had borne. The scourging power also exceeded their bounds, and by cruelty and rapine brought upon themselves calamities such as they had inflicted on others.

A voice from the disposer of human events, commanded the release of four other messengers of vengeance that had been bound in the great river Euphrates. It was done. The hordes of Mohammedan Tartars, the Seljukians ; the Moguls, headed by the terrible Gengis-Khan ; the Ottomans, and the Moguls again, under the more terrible Tamerlane ; rolled like successive waves of desolating flame over a large portion of the world. The locust-like horsemen, with their destroying leader, were cast in the shade by those more horrible messengers of wrath whose work was to slay the third part of men.* The hosts that went forth upon this mission of desolation were peculiar. They were horsemen ; and such hosts of cavalry as had not been marshalled before. Myriads of myriads waited to do the bidding of the avengers.†

* Rev. ix : 13-15.

† The Turkish and Tartar tribes numbered their cavalry by myriads, i. e. by a *toman*, or 10,000 horse. *Gibbon* speaks of "the *myriads* of the Turkish horse overspreading the Greek frontier," and the Turks of Mount Altai as "being both men and horses proudly computed by *millions*." It is stated that when Ladislaus, king of Hungary, went out against Amurath with 24,000 horse, Dracula, governor of Wallachia, advised him not to attack the emperor of the Turks with so small an army, since he went out hunting every day with more than that number!—*Gill* on Rev. ix : 17.

In splendid garments of scarlet, blue and yellow, like breast-plates of fire, and jacinth ; mounted upon horses terrible as lions,* they came forth to punish those who warred against the Highest. Europe was alarmed. The terror of the Moslem name spread itself every where. Their conquests were extended, and the serpent-like poison that followed in their train, was the portion of those who survived the fierceness of their conquering might. Oppression, violence, taxation, and robbery, were afflictions that made the condition of the living more burdensome than that of the dead.

But besides all the advantages afforded by the *number* of these barbarian armies, that gathered like countless vultures to their prey, they seem to have been furnished with new and strange means of destruction. From the mouths, as it were, of these ferocious horsemen, there seemed to be vomited forth fire and smoke and brimstone.† In all the preceding ages of warfare since the world began, there was no such agent of destruction as this introduced. The first account given us in history of the employment of cannon relates, that the Mohammedan Moors made use of them in defending Algeriza, in Grenada, from the assaults of the Castillians.‡ Their use, subse-

* See the account of the Chaldean horses " swifter than leopards and more fierce than evening wolves."—*Habak.* i : 8. † *Rev.* ix : 15-19.

‡ " The besieged thundered upon the king's camp with *cannon*, which were here first employed, as all the Spanish historians agree."

quently, became more common. When Mahomet II. brought his army of four hundred thousand men, mostly cavalry, against Constantinople, one could hardly fail to see, in their prodigious artillery, carrying stone bullets—some of one hundred, and one, even, of six hundred pounds weight—a most striking resemblance to the innumerable lion-headed horsemen, vomiting fire, and smoke, and brimstone, and death, from their mouths; which were so aptly described, ages before, by the inspired seer of Patmos. By these were multitudes destroyed. Constantinople fell. A religion which had but its name to recommend it, sunk before the fanatical fury of the followers of the false prophet, and the crescent floated proudly above that prostrate “banner of the cross,” which had never been unfurled had men recollected that the kingdom of Jesus was not of this world, and that his cross was no fit emblem for those who refused his yoke and violated his requirements. On them fell the fierce wrath of God. From the horns of “the

A. D. 1341, MODERN UNIVERSAL HISTORY, Vol. xvi, p. 419. The Mohammedans continued to make use of this destructive invention, Mohammed II, the Great, in 1452, having built a strong fortress on the European side of the Bosphorus, about five miles from Constantinople, levied tribute on all passing vessels. A Venetian refusing to pay was sunk by a shot from their *cannon*.—*Hales' Chron.* Vol. iii. 416. Muskets were in use in 1430, and by means of them the inhabitants of Lucca defended themselves against the assaults of the Florentines, who had only some large artillery.—MODERN UNIVERSAL HISTORY, Vol. xxxiii, p. 260.

golden altar” of *mercy* had gone forth a cry, strange even as “the *wrath* of the *Lamb*,” the long-suffering of God could abide such iniquities no longer, and the rod of chastisement and the bridle of restraint were put upon the apostate people as just judgments of the Almighty. In the language of the historian, “the history of the Turks is nothing else but the true record of the woful ruins of the greater part of the Christian commonwealth.”* And yet, though all these calamities came upon them; though the avenging hand of Divine Providence was so clearly manifest—yet those who survived the calamities were unmoved by their terrible power. The rest of the men, who were not killed by these plagues, yet repented not. They had no desire to adjust their controversy with God; they loved rebellion too well; they still worshiped demons; they still adored idols and images of gold, and silver, and brass, and wood, which could neither hear nor see nor walk. They repented not of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.† The most terrible crimes were perpetrated by those who still claimed to be the vicegerents of God on earth. Said an orator at the council of Lateran, A.D. 1512, “We have seen violence, rapine, adulteries, incest—every pestilence of wickedness, so confound all things sacred and profane—so strike upon the sacred vessel, that amidst the waves of iniquity, she was

* Knolles’ History.

† Rev. ix: 20-21.

almost foundered.”* The world reeked with pollution. The professed Church revelled in the rottenness of licentious indulgence. The great apostacy had come ; the word of God was sealed ; the gospel of Christ was prohibited. A few sought to be at peace with God, but they suffered the loss of all things ; and from their names the stigma of heresy and the shame of false accusations is hardly yet removed.

It needed some thunder-note of warning to arouse men from their sleep ; it needed a messenger to cry with a voice like a lion’s roar—to testify of coming wrath—to declare that heaven’s long-suffering was almost exhausted—to announce the finishing of the mystery of divine mercy—and to herald the coming of the seventh angel who should sound the final woe to the inhabitants of the earth.† God saw the need. The reformers arose in their might ; and amid the warring discordance that grated around them like seven-fold thunders, they proclaimed their message.

* “ The crimes of Popes, copied naturally throughout Christendom, present an abundant fulfillment of this prediction. Nicholas V. gave a safe-conduct, and then immediately put the person holding it to death. Sixtus IV. put the offices of his court to sale, and was party to a conspiracy to assassinate the Medici in the cathedral of Florence. Innocent VIII. publicly owned seven illegitimate children. Alexander VI.—called by Romish writers a *serpent* and a *monster*—died of poison, intended by him for some of his cardinals,” etc. etc.—ATLAS OF PROPHECY, p. 133.

† Rev. x : 1-7.

They tore the word of God from its winding-sheet of ages that were past ; they unlocked the dark and mysterious tongues in which it was found ; they gave it to the hungering millions, who took it and devoured its words, that were “sweeter than honey and the honey-comb,” though in the struggles and persecutions which they endured for it as they went forth to bear witness of the truth before many nations, peoples, tongues, and kings ; they found that that which had been sweet as honey to the taste, was to them like the wormwood and the gall, which their master received to drink.* Nevertheless, the word of God grew and prevailed. The earth was lightened with its glory, and multitudes came with joyful and obedient hearts to acquaint themselves with God, and be at peace. Still, as before, many heard, but few obeyed ; many were called, but few were chosen. The struggle between the Church of God and his foes waxed intense. The blood of his witnesses was poured out as the dust, and their flesh scattered as the dung. Their ashes were flung to the heedless winds, or cast upon the restless waters. They groaned and died in prisons and in cells. They expired beneath the most exquisite tortures that ingenuity could suggest, or malice execute. They yielded their bodies to be burned. They laid their heads upon the executioner’s block, for the testimony of Jesus and the word of God. Still God raised up

* Rev. x: 8-11.

others to bear his word to the nations. And, from that day to this, he has not left himself without a host of witnesses. And in the present age his truths have been more widely spread than ever before. The Gospel has gone to every land; the word of the everlasting God has been translated into almost every tongue on earth, and copies of it are scattered like healing leaves among the sin-sick nations of the earth.*

And now, since the dawn of the Reformation, the world has had an opportunity to heed the opened word of God, accept the divine conditions of peace; close the long controversy that they have waged with God, and be restored to harmony with him. But, alas, humanity is steadfast only in its iniquity—and faithful only in its perversity. “Hath a nation changed their gods?” was the prophet’s ancient question, and the answer seemed to be, that while all idolatrous nations were steadfast in their adherence to their idols, the followers of the true God alone had proved unfaithful to their vows.†

The Reformation had in it the might of divine working, but with it was the frailty of human instrumentalities. In that cause other armor than that of righteousness was taken up, and other conflicts save

* Since 1802 more than *one hundred and twenty* different translations of the Bible, or parts thereof, have been issued, besides all that existed before. About *fifty millions* of copies have been issued by Bible Societies alone.

† Jeremiah ii : 11-13.

those of faith were engaged in. Worldly policy found admission to the arena. Strife and bitterness prevailed. Tradition still held a partial sway over the minds of those who professed themselves free. Persecution still continued, and a church which became too much like the world, and which decorated with the name of Jesus the pride and pomp of earthly state, was like the world, ready to hate, imprison, punish, and slay the members of the little flock who knew the shepherd's voice, while a stranger they would not follow. The Reformation was not the final triumph of righteousness. The controversy with God was yet unsettled. In the language of an able writer, "The lapse of three hundred years has revealed the great imperfections of that work, and shown the fallacy of the expectation then entertained of its spread and triumph through all the kingdoms of Europe. A large share of the nations that first united in it soon returned to the Catholic Church. No accessions have been made to the territory of Protestantism in Europe during the last three centuries ; while, on the other hand, the decline of the churches that still survive on the continent, especially in faith and piety, is portentous in the extreme. Sunk during the last seventy years into open and profligate infidelity, with but here and there an exception, they are now as conspicuously apostate as the idolatrous church from which they seceded, and stand in as urgent need of a total reformation of principle and

manners.”* Such, in the estimation of competent judges, is the present condition of Christendom.

A profession of allegiance to God is not enough to constitute a man a friend of God. The being called by the Christian name avails nothing. The acceptance of certain facts pertaining to the salvation of men, as historical verities, is of no account. There must be an obedient faith in Jesus Christ, and a fulfilling of his commands, or else man can never be reconciled to God. To these reasonable and easy conditions the world has never assented. They are rebellious as at the beginning. They are disobedient as they ever have been. They will not acknowledge Christ as their sovereign Lord. Men advance, but not toward God. Men progress, but not in holiness. Men become wise, but not in the wisdom of God. Men become polished, but not as stones for the diadem of Jehovah. Men become refined, but not with that fire that purges away the dross of sin. Men become elevated, but they disdain the meek humility of the Son of God. They love the world. They revere not Jehovah. They delight not in his law. They receive not his spirit. They reject his word. They oppose his will. They despise his followers. Pride and vain glory, envyings and strifes, worldliness and luxury creep in among those who once were the humble sharers in

* Exposition of the Apocalypse, by David N. Lord, p. 307. A most valuable commentary.

the sufferings of their Saviour. Among all the churches that bear the name of Jesus, where is to be found the chaste virgin, the spotless bride? How few sigh and cry for the abominations that are in the land! How few mourn over the spiritual desolation around! How few have not defiled their garments, and are prepared to walk with Christ in white! How many have left their first love! How many have a name to live and are dead! How many are lukewarm and nauseous, because they are neither hot nor cold! How many boast of riches and increase of goods, while they are poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked! How many are at ease in Zion! How many say "to-morrow shall be as this day and more abundant!" How many join hands with the multitude and shun the cross of Christ! How many think more of earth than of heaven or hell! How many follow the multitude to do evil! How many despise the strait and narrow way! How many feast when they should fast, and robe themselves with purple when they should sit in sackcloth and ashes! How many are swayed by the lightest breath of popular censure or applause! How many forget that the Lord hath a controversy with the nations, and that they should pass the time of their sojourning here in fear! Ah, the world is still, as ever, the enemy of God. Satan is its God, and destruction its destiny.

If we glance at the nations of the earth, we find

nothing to brighten the prospects of the race. The law of God is not the law of men. There is not a nation that obeys God—not a nation that follows Christ. Four-fifths of the inhabitants of the globe reject even the dubious title of “Christian nations.” Four-fifths are sunk in heathenism, superstition, idolatry, and Mohammedanism. Not more than one-twentieth of the race profess a personal allegiance to Jesus of Nazareth, and of these “he that searcheth the hearts” alone can tell how few are his faithful followers. But the nations sit in darkness. Not because they must, but because they *will*. Not that no light has come into the world, but because men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil. And if *individuals* are so rebellious, what shall be said of nations? What can we say, but in the language of a statesman and orator,* “There is not a Christian nation on the earth.” Where is there a nation that hath not blood on all its palaces of pride and power? Where is there a nation that hath not shame and crime amid all its glory? Where is there a nation that doth not establish iniquity by law? Where is there a nation against which the blood of murdered innocence does not cry out?—Where is there a nation that hath not in its treasures the gains of iniquity, the hire of ungodliness, the wages of oppression, and the price of blood? Where is there a nation against which the cries of the op-

* Gov. Louis Kossuth's Speech in New-York.

pressed have not ascended to the ears of God?—Where is there a nation that can stand justified before the Highest?

Do we then wonder at the commotions that rock the world? Do we wonder at the turmoil that reigns around? Do we wonder at the dark clouds that hang portentously on all earth's political horizon? Do we wonder at the vengeful out-flashings of retributive justice that appall our hearts? Do we wonder at the struggles of the oppressed, and at the violence of the oppressor? Do we wonder at the mutual hatred of the nations that God hath made of one blood? Do we wonder at the self-destructive infatuation that pervades the councils of the mighty? Do we wonder at the failure of man's fairest schemes? Do we wonder at the feverish restlessness that pervades the world? Do we wonder that there is distress of nations with perplexity? Do we wonder that men's hearts fail them for fear, and for looking for those things that are coming on the earth? Do we wonder that nations heave in restless fury, like the roaring of the ocean's billows? Let us learn then the reason of all this. Let us take the key that unlocks the whole: "THE LORD HATH A CONTROVERSY WITH THE NATIONS." It is neither adjusted nor suspended. It is neither forgotten nor forsaken. The conflict goes on. The world are at war with God: with his truth, his justice, his holiness, his love, his purposes, and his law. *This is*

the secret of earth's "vanity and vexation of spirit." This is the poison in all earth's banquets. This is the element that dislocates earth's machinery, and sends it grating in disordered fury to work its own perdition. This has stained the pride of all glory until now. This has been the rock upon which every mortal enterprise has been wrecked, and this is still the bane of earth, the ruin of the world.

We have briefly surveyed the controversy of God with the nations of the earth, from the beginning of the world till now. We have cast a hasty glance along the track of time, and found it like the prophetic scroll, full of "mourning, and lamentation, and woe." We have surveyed the present. We have seen the multitudes that sit in gross darkness, and that hate the light. We have seen the still deeper guilt of those who have sold themselves to work iniquity, with the word of God before them, and the gospel of Christ sounding in their ears. We have seen that while grace abounds, sin also abounds; while light is shed abroad men close their eyes upon it; and while men might be at peace with God, they choose to remain at war with their Creator. We have seen all this, and if *our* hearts sink at the recital of such iniquity, oh! what must be the feelings of Him who, with an all-seeing eye, scans the open and secret wickedness of this world, and takes in at a glance the whole deep depravity of a rebellious race! Oh, how this world must seem, as it rolls day by day its reek-

ing abominations before the piercing gaze of Him whose eyes are pure, and whose nature is holiness ! Ah, if man could but take in at a glance what Jehovah daily beholds in this polluted world, he would learn more than he has ever yet comprehended, of the “long suffering” and the *love* of God. He would see a patience long and tried—he would see a love, deep and unsearchable—he would see a compassion tender, pure, and disinterested. He would see a mercy that endureth forever.

Reader, the long suffering of God is for man’s salvation !* He waits that men may seek his face. Though the world is doomed, individuals may be saved, and saved to-day. Let us improve this hour. Our controversy with God may be decided at once. Let us seek the Lord while he may be found, and call upon him while he is near.

“To-day the Saviour calls,
Ye wanderers come ;
Oh, ye benighted souls,
Why longer roam !
The Spirit calls to-day,
Yield to its power ;
Oh, grieve it not away,
'Tis mercy’s hour.”

* 2 Peter iii: 15.

CHAPTER VIII.

WE turn away from the consideration of the prevailing iniquity of mankind to examine another question. What is to be the issue of this great and protracted controversy ? Shall it go on forever ? Shall it wax worse and worse ? Shall the warfare be perpetual ? The discord eternal ? Or how shall it be ? Shall the controversy end ? If so, how ? By what means shall creation's harp-strings be put in tune ? How shall peace brood o'er earth again, and the gentle dove bring back to this warring world the olive branch once more ? Will the principles of right and truth be overthrown, and the cause of iniquity prevail at last ? No ; not while God Almighty rules the universe. Not while justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne. Shall the antagonism be eternal ? Shall evil and rebellion forever dart their snaky tongues, and send up their blasphemous hissing in the presence of the God of heaven ? This cannot be ; for then how shall the day come when God shall "be all and in all ?"*

Two ways only remain for the adjustment of this great controversy. First : by the submission of may

* 1 Corinthians xv : 28.

to the will of God ; or Second : by the destruction of the rebellious by the power of God. In one or the other of these ways this controversy must find its issue. How shall it be ?

If we reason from the analogies furnished by the past history of mortal affairs, we can certainly have but little hope of human improvement. The uniform tendency of humanity has been downward.—Man's penitence has been brief—his apostacy permanent. His acknowledgment of divine authority has been feigned—his fealty to Satan has been sincere. His reformatations have been temporary—his revolts protracted. He has turned to God only when he has been roused as by the thunder's voice—and then he has fallen away so quietly, and so calmly, that apostacy was perfected before it was observed. His returns to God have been like the toil of the laboring oarsman as he heads his boat against the stream—his departures have been like the floating of an unguided bark upon the bosom of a gently flowing river, that merges its tide in the dark rapids that surround the vortex of destruction. The works of the flesh are manifest. They have been manifested as widely as the race has been scattered, and as long as man has lived on the earth. They are the same everywhere, and throughout all generations. The fountain is corrupt and the stream is corrupted. The heart is deceitful and the life hypocritical. The source of wickedness is within, and the manifestation

of it without. That which is born of the flesh is *flesh* ; and inherits all the lusts and vileness natural to carnality. The works of the flesh are these : “ Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, withcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like.”* These are not the occasional outbreakings or mistakes of a better nature, but they are the legitimate actions of a perverted and fallen character. They are the lusts of the flesh that war against the soul ;† they are the outworkings of a law of sin in man’s members which wars against the law of the mind ;‡ they are the fruits of the carnal or fleshly mind which is enmity against God—which is not subject to his law—which knows no rule but lust—which ever lurks about those who dwell in this mortal state—which must be kept under by tireless vigilance, else it would make even an apostle a cast-away—which can only be subdued by the power of God, controlled by his holy Spirit, and crucified and slain by the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ.§

And this settled, and perverse, and unholy disposition, does not change in “ the natural man.” Refinement does not change it. Civilization does not change it. A profession of allegiance to Christ does not change it. The repressive enactments of earthly

* Gal. v: 20, 21. † 1 Pet. iii: 11. ‡ Rom. vii: 23.

§ Rom. viii: 7 ; 1 Cor. ix: 27 ; Gal. ii: 20 ; v. 24.

governments do not change it. It is ever the same. The tree is vile, the fruit is like unto it. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? No more can the perfidious hearts and lives of a revolted race be brought by any such means into allegiance to the God of heaven. The 'old man' is the same forever, and the only way that a change can be effected is when men are "created anew in Christ Jesus unto good works."*

The only permanent reformations which God has wrought in all the ages that are past have been individual works. All national improvements have terminated in degeneracy or revolt. All ecclesiastical improvements have terminated in backsliding or apostacy when their course was fully run. Out of all these God selects his chosen "remnant, according to the election of grace." Among the apostate Jews he reserves his seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal, and the idolatrous Gentiles he visits "to take out of them a people for his name." The hidden wisdom of God is unknown to the princes of this world; the preaching of the cross is to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness; but to the saved, both Jews and Greeks, it is Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.† Always and everywhere, among antediluvi-

* Eph. ii: 10; iv: 24.

† 1 Kings xix: 18; Rom. xi: 4; Acts xv: 14; 1 Cor. i: 18-24.

ans, Sodomites, Egyptians, Caananites, Assyrians, Babylonians, Jews, Persians, Grecians, Romans ; among all nations, tribes and generations, the works of the flesh have been manifest and identical. Among barbarous and polished, learned and unlearned, powerful and weak, honorable and vile, the same dispositions have been manifested, and with persistent perversity, men have refused to submit to the righteous laws of God, and have disdained to seek his mercy or adjust the long continued controversy which they have waged with him.—Never has mercy prevailed with the multitude. Never has goodness been appreciated. Never has man submitted to the rule of God. In all the controversy heretofore judgment has been the only infallible resort. Nothing but an overwhelming manifestation of wrath has stayed the tide of ungodliness. Nothing but vengeance has hushed the uprising discord of blasphemy. Nothing but the red flame of righteous indignation has purged away the deeply aggravated guilt which the ungodly have contracted. The sword has been bathed in blood—it has come down upon the people of God's curse. They have been blotted out, and their fallen palaces and desolate cities have been left as warnings that the way of the transgressor is hard ; warnings that would be remembered by the few, but forgotten by the many ; thus rendering fresh judgments a necessity for the restraint of the overrunning tide of evil.

If, then, we apply the analogies of the past in forming our judgment of the probabilities of the future, we can reach but one conclusion. Judging from the past, mankind will grow worse and worse, until divine judgments shall break in upon their guilty course, like thunderbolts from overhanging clouds. I know all this is contrary to the current expectation of the world ; I know that every ray of light is eagerly hailed as the dawning of a golden age ; I know that however men differ in other things, they nearly agree in this. The despot sees promise of future good in the stability of existing institutions, and in the crushing out of the last dim spark of patriotic fire that burns within the human breast. The republican looks for *his* halcyon days when existing orders are subverted, thrones overturned, tyrants slain, and "liberty, equality, and fraternity" universally prevail. The worldling looks for his millennium amid anticipated scenes of material wealth and prosperity. The philosopher looks for a higher intellectual culture, and a return to an ideal simplicity of social life. The bigot sees millennial glory in the exclusive promulgation of his contracted creed. The latitudinarian hopes for the same in the largest and most indefinite condition of liberty of speech and thought. The believer sees his vision of peace in the spread of the Gospel, the diffusion of the Scriptures, and the revelation of God. The infidel is equally sanguine in his anticipations of the

triumph of reason, the overthrow of the Bible, and the downfall of everything save the religion of the God of nature. The divine contemplates the new order of things as a result of a manifestation of the Spirit of the living God. The necromancer hails *his* jubilee as foreshadowed and introduced by pretended manifestations of the spirits of dead men. The chaste look forward to it as a time of domestic purity and conjugal fidelity. The Mormon and free-loving Spiritualist contemplate it as an opportunity for the full gratification of "passional attractions," magnetic itchings, and fleshly lusts; and so each, hugging his idol, or rejoicing in his faith, looks forward to the hoped for period, when their idol shall be enthroned, and their faith realized, as the "good time coming." It is strange that all these varying classes, holding such antagonistic and mutually destructive tenets, can agree in *one* thing. Yet they do agree in one thing. They all look for the golden age. They all hope to behold its dawning, though they cannot agree at all as to *what* is to be desired or anticipated. Yet each class anticipates the gratification of their own desires. All alike ignore the analogies of judgment that are past. All seem to forget that God wages terrible controversy with sin, and with the world of sinners. All forget that the world lieth in the grasp of the wicked one.* All unite in saying smooth things. All prophesy peace,

* 1 John v: 19. "The wicked," *to poneros*. See ver. 18, ch. iii: 12.

peace. All disdain the thought, that in the midst of this security the thunderbolts of divine wrath may break forth ; and all hug the fond anticipation, that by some gentle transformation—by some philosopher's stone which they, each of them alone, have discovered—this age of iron is to be changed to one of gold, and these times of deep and dark abominations are to improve to days of halcyon bliss and purity. And so the ship of human hope and pride, is allowed to sail calmly and easily down the gulfstream of ruin, and yet expected by some means to reach the port of quietude, and peace, and joy at last.

In all these anticipations of humanity, there seems to be one element of truth in which they all agree—namely, the one fact of a glorious future for the world. But the pathway that leads to that scene of delight, they vainly hope to find, in the courses which they pursue. The intervening shades and clouds that precede the dawning of that day they forget. They look for the light of day ere the darkness of night has passed, and they hope for the coming glory without the rising of the Sun of righteousness, with healing in his wings. In the hopes of the world, we can see no rational prospect of an adjustment of earth's controversy. All history, all analogy, all nature, testify against this phantom-hope.*

* For proof that the now popular doctrine of the conversion of the world by the preaching of the Gospel is of very recent origin,

But if we turn from these, and glance at the present condition of the world, we are drawn to the same conclusion. The dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty, and the superior genius and intelligence of civilized and Christian governments are used to bind the fetters of thralldom upon those who are in ignorance—to crush the rising spirit of manhood from the breast of the degraded—to subject the defenceless to grinding oppression, for the sake of gain and glory—and to force, even upon the unwilling heathen, those noxious and infernal habits and vices, which work the death of the individual and the ruin of society. Though God has sent his word running very swiftly through the world, yet from the same countries that issue it, go forth curses so dire, that none can describe their terrible power. The idols for heathen adoration are many of them said to have been the handiwork of the dwellers in a Christian land.* From the same ports go forth missionaries and murderers—soldiers of the cross and soldiers with carnal weapons. The same ship carries to heathen lands, guns and gospel, bran-

and was disbelieved for more than fifteen hundred years from the birth of Christ, consult “The Voice of the Church on the Reign of Christ,” by D. T. Taylor, which may be had of the Publishers of the present volume. The reader will there find the testimonies of nearly four hundred of the greatest preachers and theologians the Church has ever produced, from the beginning down till now, against the prevalent opinion of a world’s conversion.

* Manufactured in Birmingham, England.

dy and bibles, prophecies and poisons, oracles and opium ; and the effects are proportionate to the vast predominance of evil efforts, and the natural proclivity of the human heart to sin. Missionaries do much, but the messengers of Mammon do infinitely more. The stinted contributions of individuals sustain the heralds of peace ; but the treasured millions of a nation's wealth are lavished to sustain oppressive rule by sanguinary contest.

Throughout Christendom, there are the perils of secret and open apostacy that thicken on every hand. The authority of God is but little regarded in this age of temporizing and Mammon-worship. Other lords have dominion. Fashion, pride, wealth, glory, pleasure, lust, and iniquity—these are the gods that have reverence here, and whose votaries are among the great and mighty of this world.

The Word of God is not revered as it should be. Men disavow its inspiration, they deny its authority, they cavil at its teachings, they wrest its truths, they make it void through their traditions, they turn their ears away from the truth, they are turned unto fables, they cannot endure sound doctrine. The plain, simple truths of Almighty God, are too insipid for them. They must have human eloquence, flowery essays, elegant orations, and soft sayings, in the place of those pungent outpourings of divine truth, that lay bare the heart, that expose its falsity, that probe the conscience, that arraign the soul

before the word of Christ as before the great white throne, and which only offer peace and salvation upon the grounds of unconditional and eternal obedience to the will of the living God.

And alas, there are too many who have no higher calling than to minister thus to the comfort of the itching of the ears that wait upon their words. The might and faith of holy men of old is far too rare. Gold outweighs grace, and silver has more influence than salvation. The terror of the Lord is forgotten, the judgments of the Lord are ignored, the wrath of the Lord is in the shade. The judgment is denied, the resurrection forgotten, damnation is unpopular, hell horrid, and destruction detestable! The heart is left full of idols, and prophesying smooth things is disguised under the subtle name of "preaching love." But alas, *this* love is not the love of God to man, nor the love of Jesus to the lost. It is not that mighty, devoted, all-sacrificing impulse, that tears the soul from every idol, that weans the heart from all luxurious ease and selfishness, that binds the body as a living sacrifice to the horns of Jehovah's altar, and that yearns with unutterable longings for the glory of God and the salvation of men. This love that fills the heart with the agony of intense desire—this love that allies the soul to the Great Eternal—this love that turns "the world upside down," if it may but pluck sinners as brands from the burning—this love that counts all things loss

and dross that it may win Christ—this love that, renouncing all its worldly honors, glories only in the cross of the Lord Jesus, is in its character and manifestations very far from resembling the smooth sayings, the soft and honeyed words, with which men are accustomed to be lulled in the lap of fleshy security, and enabled to slide quietly, and peacefully, and unconsciously down to perdition.

Under *such* influences, while iniquity abounds, the love of many waxes cold. Faith is weak, faith is low, faith is dead. Zeal is unfashionable, and earnestness is impolite. Now and then a spasmodic revival, like a galvanic shock, thrills a church for a moment, and then leaves them to relapse into a slumber more lethargic and death-like than before. Pride creeps in—humility goes out. Aristocracy takes the chief seats in the synagogues, and piety is crowded in the corner. Evil is done that good may come of it. Sin is winked at that money may be gained. Wordlings are courted for their influence and their gold ; and pure religion, and undefiled before God, is as unusual as it is desirable. The earnest, fervent piety of other days is remembered by some with regret for its departure, while others gladly discard the staff and toil of the “pilgrim’s path” for the comfort of the “celestial railroad,” even though the track be far from the King’s highway, and Apollyon himself be installed as engineer !

Outside the church things are still worse. Hosts

of apostates gather there. Many, disgusted with hypocrisy, rail at all religion. Infidels crack their impious jests, and find within the pale of the church abundant basis for their bitterest scoffs. Necromancy prevails. The old tricks and hallucinations of ancient heathenism are revamped and palmed upon the world as the opening glories of a new era. The demons of darkness are invoked, and their strange responses—a medley of falsehood, blasphemy, and folly—are received as revelations from celestial “spheres!”—“Doctrines of demons” are rife. The marriage covenant is treated with contempt—laws, both of God and man, are derided, and satanic revelations authorize adultery, fornication, and the countless abominations that are, with such witchcraft, “the works of the flesh.”* The ages of heathenish darkness seem setting in upon us. The abominations of demon worship are revived. The juggling and satanic mystery of ancient sorcery and divination have returned to curse the world, and the lurid and baleful flickerings of this phantom-light are held by many to be the veritable dawns of the perfect day! As Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these resist the truth. Men of corrupt minds reprobate concerning the faith. Deceptive demons go forth to the kings

* The reader may consult “Spiritualism, a Satanic Delusion and a Sign of the Times,” by Wm. Ramsey, D.D., a most valuable work upon this subject, published by H. L. Hastings. The writer hopes to issue a work on the subject of spiritual influences ere long, if God permit.

of the earth and the whole world to array them in conflict against the Almighty God. Multitudes are meshed and ensnared in these strong delusions, because they believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.* The results are obvious. Crime abounds. The mad lust for wealth pushes men beyond the pale of religion, morality, or honesty. Adulteries, murders, and all kindred abominations haunt us on every side. Dishonesty causes no surprise. Violence is a matter of common occurrence. Veniality and corruption are all around us. Blood toucheth blood. Vice rolls in torrents. Piety weeps. Judgment is turned away backwards, and justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter. Yea, truth faileth, and he that departeth from evil is accounted mad.† Intemperance, riot, and revelry, with all the horrid crimes that flow from them as streams from a fountain, prevail on every hand. Iniquities are defended, crimes are legalized, villainy is extenuated, and ungodliness is made honorable. Darkness is put for light, and light for darkness. Good is put for evil, and evil for good. Humility is despised, godliness is derided, righteousness is nearly obsolete, and piety almost forgotten.

Turn which way we will we find no general disposition to yield to the divine requisitions. The great

* 2 Tim. iii : 8 ; Rev. xvi : 14 ; 2 Thess. ii : 11-12.

† Isaiah lix : 15—*margin*.

controversy is still pending. There is no peace to the wicked, saith my God. The tumult shows no token of abatement. The broils and strifes of mortals still go on. The dark clouds still mantle the skies. The heavens gather blackness. The thunders of approaching wrath still mutter. The Lord hath a controversy with the nations ! *What shall be its issue ?*

Shall earth ever find rest ? Shall peace stretch her mantle over this world again ? Shall light break in upon the darkness and chase it all away ? Shall the discordant jarrings ever end, and earth take up its appointed part and chime with all the countless orbs of heaven in the glorious music of the spheres ? *Shall* the earth be full of the knowledge and glory of Jehovah ? Shall it rejoice in all its hills and vales and grow vocal with its Maker's praise ? And if so, *how ?* How shall the great struggle between light and darkness, between good and evil, end ? Who can tell us ? Who can relieve the dread suspense that encompasses us ? Oh for the voice of inspiration to reveal to us the mighty secret ! Let us search the sacred oracles and find answers to these questions.

CHAPTER IX.

THROUGH the analogies of the past and the aspects of the present, speak with no uncertain voice concerning the probable issue of this mighty conflict, yet *their* verdict is manifestly insufficient to decide the question, in the absence of more positive testimony. Analogies may be mistaken—appearances are deceptive. God alone can scan and foretell the future. To his word then we turn, and before the door of the eternal oracle we enquire, What shall be the end of these wonders? What shall be the issue of this great controversy? We must refer to the words of the prophets of God, and learn from them the course and issue of this terrible contention.

First, then, let us listen to the words of the prophet Jeremiah, who has so plainly spoken of this controversy. As the custom of kings anciently was to inflict death on criminals by a cup of poison, this figure is made use of in speaking of God's dealings with the nations of the earth. The prophet, who in his childhood had been set "over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build and to

plant,"* was therefore bidden to bear the cup of wrath to the enemies of God. "For thus saith the Lord God of Israel unto me ; Take the wine-cup of this fury at my hand, and cause all the nations, to whom I send thee, to drink it. And they shall drink, and be moved, and be mad, because of the sword that I will send among them. Then took I the cup at the Lord's hand, and made all the nations to drink, unto whom the Lord had sent me."† He then proceeds to an enumeration of the nations that were designated as guilty criminals, deserving of divine wrath, and destined to drink the wine-cup of his fury. "To wit, Jerusalem, and the cities of Judah, and the kings thereof, and the princes thereof, to make them a desolation, an astonishment, a hissing, and a curse ; as it is this day ; Pharaoh king of Egypt, and his servants, and his princes, and all his people ; and all the mingled people, and all the kings of the land of Uz, and all the kings of the land of the Philistines, and Ashkelon, and Azzah, and Ekron, and the remnant of Ashdod, Edom, and Moab, and the children of Ammon, and all the kings of Tyrus, and all the kings of Zidon, and the kings of the isles which are beyond the sea, Dedan, and Tema, and Buz, and all that are in the utmost corners, and all the kings of Arabia, and all the kings of the mingled people that dwell in the desert, and all the kings of Zimri, and all the kings of Elam, and all the kings

* Jer. i : 10.

† Jer. xxv : 15-17.

of the Medes.”* After indicating the various nations that were thus doomed to bear the judgments of the Lord, the prophet’s vision seems to widen and encompass unknown and unnamed nations and empires, that were yet hidden in the womb of time—for he continues to say : “ And all the kings of the north, far and near, one with another, and *all the kingdoms of the world, which are upon the face of the EARTH* : and the king of Sheshach shall drink after them. Therefore thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel ; Drink ye, and be drunken, and spue, and FALL, and RISE NO MORE, because of the sword which I will send among you. And it shall be, if they refuse to take the cup at thy hand to drink, then shalt thou say unto them, Thus saith the Lord of hosts ; YE SHALL CERTAINLY DRINK. For lo, I begin to bring evil on the city which is called by my name, and should ye be utterly unpunished ? Ye shall not be unpunished ; for I will call for a sword upon all the INHABITANTS OF THE EARTH, saith the Lord of hosts. Therefore prophesy thou against them all these words, and say unto them, The Lord shall roar from on high, and utter his voice from his holy habitation ; he shall mightily roar upon his habitation ; he shall give a shout, as they that tread the grapes, against ALL THE INHABITANTS OF THE EARTH. A noise shall come even to the ENDS OF THE EARTH ; FOR THE

* Jer. xxv : 18-25.

LORD HATH A CONTROVERSY WITH THE NATIONS, HE WILL PLEAD WITH ALL FLESH ; he will give them that are WICKED TO THE SWORD, saith the Lord.— Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Behold, evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth. AND THE SLAIN OF THE LORD SHALL BE AT THAT DAY FROM ONE END OF THE EARTH EVEN UNTO THE OTHER END OF THE EARTH : THEY SHALL NOT BE LAMENTED, NEITHER GATHERED, NOR BURIED ; THEY SHALL BE DUNG UPON THE GROUND.”

Here is the terrible history of this controversy, forewritten by the servant of the living God. The judgments that commenced upon Jerusalem and Israel for their rejection of divine authority, were to overspread the earth. They commenced in isolated inflictions upon various nations and tribes. And where are those nations whose death-warrant is here issued by Jehovah ? With scarce an exception they are gone. Their power has been broken, their cities overthrown, their governments subverted, their palaces desolated, their glory departed, and they have perished from the face of the earth. But others were to share in these judgments. The bounds of geographical knowledge were reached, but the cup still overflowed. Palestine and all the adjacent countries had been mentioned—the great empires of antiquity had been included, and still he extends the dreadful malediction, and hurls it down to time’s remotest

years ; and fastens it upon "ALL THE KINGDOMS OF THE WORLD WHICH ARE UPON THE FACE OF THE EARTH." No refusal can avail them. They must certainly drink the cup of fury. The world shall not be unpunished. God will call for a sword against all the inhabitants of the earth. He shall rush to their destruction as the vintagers tread the grapes. The noise of the conflict "shall come even to the ends of the earth, FOR THE LORD HATH A CONTROVERSY WITH THE NATIONS." And how shall it issue? "He will plead with ALL FLESH—he will give them that are WICKED to THE SWORD." The tempest of wrath shall burst like a furious tornado. It shall fall grievously upon the head of the wicked—it shall do its work of desolation "in the latter days,"* and as its result the slain of the Lord shall strew the earth from end to end, ungathered, unlamented and unburied, they shall be dung on the ground. The mighty, the great, the princes and the nobles, are called upon to mourn over their impending ruin.—"Howl, ye shepherds, and cry ; and wallow yourselves in the ashes, ye principal of the flock ; for the days of your slaughter and of your dispersions are accomplished ; and ye shall fall like a pleasant vessel. And the shepherds shall have no way to flee, nor the principal of the flock to escape. A voice of the cry of the shepherds, and a howling of the principal of the flock, shall be heard : for the Lord hath

* Jer. xxiii : 19-20.

spoiled their pasture. And the peaceable habitations are cut down because of the fierce anger of the Lord. He hath forsaken his covert, as the lion : for their land is desolate because of the fierceness of the oppressor, and because of his fierce anger.”*

This is their doom. Their days of slaughter, in which they have nourished their hearts, and dispersed and killed the just, are ended.† They shall be destroyed as a crystal goblet is shivered by its fall, and over all their hopes and prospects brood the clouds of darkness, desolation, and despair.

Such is the terrible destiny that overhangs the impenitent world. A destruction so awful and so wide-spread, has never been known since the waters of Noah overwhelmed the race. No history can furnish a fulfillment of the whole of this terrible denunciation. The controversy has not yet reached its final issue. Some nations have fallen ; but “that day” in which “the slain of the Lord” shall bestrew the world, and the wicked shall be given to the sword of his vengeance, is manifestly yet future. No local judgment can accomplish it ; no mere national calamity can answer to it. It overhangs THE WORLD like a pall of darkness. It is the death warrant of a godless and impious race. Nothing but a slaughter, wide as the world, can fill the terrible picture. “For, behold, the Lord will COME with fire and with his chariots, like a whirlwind, to ren

* Jer. xxv : 34-38.

† James v : 5-6.

der his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. For by FIRE and by HIS SWORD will the LORD plead with ALL FLESH : and the SLAIN of the Lord shall be MANY.”*

The whole tenor of the Scriptures accords with this representation. It were almost too great a task to quote the various passages that point to this terrible conclusion. It is the universal voice, the concurrent testimony of prophets and apostles, and of Christ himself, that necessitates this decision.

If we turn over the pages of inspiration, we look in vain for any tokens or predictions of a process of gradual improvement, that is to usher in a brighter day. The whole Bible represents the world as growing worse and worse, until the protracted controversy reaches its terrible consummation, in manifestations of divine indignation ; compared with which, all previous national inflictions are like rain-drops before the storm.

If we examine the writings of the Psalmist, we find him describing the king to whom God has given “length of days forever and ever,” upon whom “honor and majesty” are laid by a divine hand, who is made full of joy by the countenance of God†, and who, through the mercy of the Most High, “shall not be moved ;” and to him the Psalmist says :—“Thine hand shall find out all thine enemies : thy right hand shall find out those that hate thee. Thou

* Isaiah lxvi : 15-16.

† Acts ii : 28.

shalt make them as a fiery oven in the time of thine anger: the Lord shall swallow them up in his wrath, and the fire shall devour them. Their fruit shalt thou destroy from the earth, and their seed from among the children of men.”* If we glance at the second Psalm, we find the same issue presented. In the midst of the rage of the heathen, and the vain imaginations of the people—in the midst of the plotting of rulers, and the impotent devices of kings—amid purposes of rebellion, and plots of mutinous revolt, then, observing the whole—“He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: Jehovah hath said unto me, Thou art my Son: this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron: thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.”† The same thought breaks out in another place, where the Lord is called up from the warring tumults of the world, and bidden to sit at God’s right hand, till his enemies are made his footstool by the power of the Almighty Father. The rod of his strength is to go forth out of Zion, and he is to rule in the midst of his enemies. Then

* Ps. xxi: 8-10.

† Ps. ii: 4-9.

after an allusion to his everlasting regal priesthood, there comes in the work of the Almighty Father, in the overthrow of the foes of his Son :—"The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath. He shall judge among the heathen ; he shall fill the places with the dead bodies ; he shall wound the heads over many countries."*

Again, when God is presented as the refuge and strength of his people, the process of their deliverance seems to be narrated as follows : "The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved : he uttered his voice, the earth melted. The Lord of hosts is with us ; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolation he hath made in the earth. He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth ; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder ; he burneth the chariot in the fire. Be still, and know that I am God : I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth. The Lord of hosts is with us ; the God of Jacob is our refuge."†

In this manner God closes the controversy, and commands the silence and the reverence of the world, while he claims the honor and exaltation which is his due. And there is no other prospect than this of peace or blessing to this misgoverned world, in all the noble lyrics of Israel's royal bard. If the earth is called to be joyful at the triumphant reign

* Ps. cx : 5, 6.

† Ps. xlv : 6-11.

of Jehovah, while righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne, then we are told, "A FIRE goeth before him, and BURNETH UP HIS ENEMIES ROUND ABOUT. His lightnings enlightened the world; the earth saw, and trembled. The hills melted like wax at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth. The heavens declare his righteousness, and all THE PEOPLE SEE HIS GLORY.* If all creation is bidden to rejoice in Jehovah's rule—if the floods clap their hands and the hills are joyful together, it is "Before the Lord: for he cometh to judge the earth: with righteousness shall he judge the world, and the people with equity."† So throughout all these sacred songs, judgment and mercy are combined.—Judgment first, crushing every foe, and mercy afterwards, poured upon God's trusting flock, like rain upon the mown grass. Judgment to close the controversy with the obdurate, and mercy unfolding all its stores of riches for the submissive and obedient.

If we survey the writings of Isaiah, the same grand and solemn truth pervades the whole of his prophecies. Out of the stem of Jesse there was to come a Rod, and a Branch was to grow out of his roots. The spirit of God was to rest upon him, and give him wisdom and power to judge and rule aright. "And he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay

* Ps. cxvii: 3-6.

† Ps. xcvi: 9.

the wicked.” Then comes a description of such joy and glory as the world has never seen since it revolted from God ; when “The earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea.”* Again the prophet refers to a period when the earth, reeling to and fro like a drunkard, is dissolved and removed like a cottage ; he declares that, “It shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth. And they shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited. Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously.”† Then the controversy is closed, and after it comes triumph and glory for the saints of the Lord. Once more he shows us the conqueror, glorious in his apparel, and traveling in the greatness of his strength, threatening that he will tread the people in his anger, and trample them in his fury, sprinkling the blood upon his garments and staining all his raiment : “For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come. And I looked, and there was none to help ; and I wondered that there was none to uphold ; therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me ; and my fury,

* Is. xi : 1-9.

† Is. xxiv : 21-23.

it upheld me. And I will tread down the people in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury, and I will bring down their strength to the earth.”* The imagery is the same here as in the prophecy of Jeremiah, the controversy closes in vengeance, with the foes of God trampled by him in fury, with shoutings as of those that tread the grapes. And so the last chapter of Isaiah again refers us to the time when God shall plead his cause by fire and sword, and crush by his power, those who have resisted and despised his long suffering and his grace.†

The predictions of Ezekiel indicate a similar consummation of this controversy. After pouring vials of terrible wrath upon the various nations that then surrounded him, his eye glances onward to the events of “the latter days.” There he describes the countless foes of God marshalled and gathering like a storm to battle, only to be met by divine vengeance, with “hailstones, fire, and brimstone,” while all the beasts of earth and fowls of heaven are summoned to come and gorge themselves with the flesh of the great and mighty of earth, who have fallen beneath the hand of divine justice.‡

Similar are the representations of Daniel in all his prophecy. Earth's kingdoms are compared to a great and terrible image, which stands in colossal grandeur, gradually degenerating in character until, from gold,

* Is. lxiii: 4-6.

† Is. lxvi: 15.

‡ Ezekiel xxxviii and xxxix: 17-22.

and silver, and brass, it descends to iron, and clay, or pottery, and *then*, sudden and terrible—a Stone, heaved by unseen hands from the brow of an adjacent mountain, rushes downward with terrible velocity, strikes the colossal giant on his feet, and then crushes the whole to powder, which is driven by whirlwinds and hurricanes, until not one vestige of it can be found ;—and then that strange and mystic Stone expands to a mountain size and fills “the whole earth.” By this was foreshadowed the fact that earth’s four great monarchies would gradually degenerate, until at last, smitten by the resistless might of God, they would be exterminated, and give place to another and better order and condition of affairs, when the God of heaven should set up a kingdom, which, like the expanding Stone, should crush every opposing power, and fill the world with its benignant and eternal influence.* Again, the four great empires of earth are likened to so many terrible and ferocious beasts ; which war with God and devour the whole earth, until the time when the fourth, with its horns of blasphemy and rage, having warred with the saints of God and crushed and worn them out, has filled its cup of iniquity. Then the seats of judgment are placed ; the Ancient of days is enthroned amid the fiery flame,—a river of fire rolls forth before him,—countless thousands gather at his beck,—the judgment sets,—the books are opened,—the blasphemies

* Daniel ii : 31-44.

of the horned beast are remembered,—the beast is slain, and his body given to the devouring fire,—the Son of Man appears in clouds of glory,—there is given to him universal and eternal dominion,—and the world, rid of its tumults and controversies, is forever subjected to his sway; “the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom *under the whole heaven*, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.”* At another time the power that rebels against God pursues its course, standing up against the prince of princes, until it is “broken without hand,”† and there the controversy ends. Finally, by another prophetic track he arrives at the same terminus,—when a mighty potentate from the north, like the one mentioned in Ezekiel, comes like a whirlwind from afar, and plants his royal tents in the glorious holy mountain, and *then*, in the midst of his might and his triumph, he shall come to his end—“none shall help him”—Michael shall stand up as the princely defender of the Israel of God,—a time of unparalleled trouble ensues,—the people of God are delivered, the multitudes of those that slumber in the dust awake to eternal life or to shame and everlasting contempt;—the controversy closes in days of glory for the church of God, when “they that be wise, shall shine as the brightness of the firmament;

* Daniel vii.

† Daniel viii: 1-26.

and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever.”*

If we turn to the prophet Joel, we find him likewise taking up the same strain. First is sin, then judgment, then returning blessing. The nations are summoned to the contest—the men of war are invited to draw near. They are bidden to beat their ploughshares into swords, and their pruning-hooks into spears. They are called to gather both weak and strong to the valley of Jehoshaphat, where God will bring down his mighty ones, and sit to judge the nations round about. Then comes the cry for vengeance—“Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe ; come get you down, for the press is full ; the fats overflow, for the wickedness is great.” Multitudes are in the valley of decision—the skies are mantled with blackness—the voice of God thunders from Zion—the heavens and earth are rocked as by an earthquake’s power—and judgments fall with exterminating fury upon the puny foes of God, and truth, and righteousness. Then there dawns the brighter day. Jerusalem is holy—strangers pass through it no more : the mountains and the valleys flow with milk and wine. Judah dwells in peace forever, and Jerusalem is safe from generation to generation.†

Amos, Obadiah, and Micah have similar allusions, and coincide in these representations. Zephaniah

* Dan. xi : 40-45 ; xii : 1-4.

† Joel iii : 9-21.

predicts the period when Jehovah shall "rise up to the prey," and gather the nations, and assemble the kingdoms, and pour upon them his indignation, even all his fierce anger, and all the earth shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy. Then when the rebellion is crushed, the long confusion and restraint that was laid upon man around the tower of Babel shall cease. The people shall be turned to a PURE LANGUAGE, and call upon Jehovah's name and serve him with one consent. *

The prophet Haggai also delivers, as from Jehovah, this message :—"I will shake the heavens and the earth ; and I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen ; and I will overthrow the chariots, and those that ride in them ; and the horses and their riders shall come down, every one by the sword of his brother."† And the apostle, commenting on this passage, teaches that this shaking is to be more terrible than that of Sinai, for the voice that then shook the earth, shall now shake not only earth, but heaven also ; and this shaking will remove everything that can be removed, while the things that cannot be shaken, and the kingdom that cannot be moved, shall abide as the permanent heritage of the servants of the Lord.‡

Zechariah also predicts corresponding events, and Malachi closes up the canon of the Old Testament

* Zeph. iii : 8, 9. † Hag. ii : 22. ‡ Hebrews xii : 25-29.

with similar statements. The proud are exalted—the wicked are honored—while the glory of the saints is reserved for the day when God shall make up his jewels. Then shall be known, in that day of terrible discrimination, the difference between the righteous and the wicked—the servant of God, and him that serveth Him not. Their different destinies shall decide their real characters beyond dispute. “For behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name, shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of hosts.”*

There is no need of further quotations from the writings of the Hebrew prophets concerning this subject. Their testimony is characterized by its unity and harmony. They all lead us to one and the same conclusion. God’s controversy with the world will be closed up by judgments of unparalleled and indescribable severity. This is the spirit of all ancient prophecy. Do the New Testament teachings correspond with this idea? Let us examine them with candor; and may God guide us into all truth.

* Mal. iii: 13-18; iv: 1-3.

CHAPTER X.

IF we survey the teachings of Jesus in the New Testament, we arrive at conclusions similar to those already intimated. He knew too well what was *in* man, and saw too fully in his own experience, the depravity of mortals, and the devices of Satan, to anticipate a speedy or a peaceful termination of God's controversy with men. Every where he points out to his followers a humble path, aloof from worldly grandeur, as the path of their pilgrimage. He calls them to forsake all for his gospel. He warns them that they shall be hated of all men for his name's sake. He sends them forth as sheep among wolves. He blesses the poor, the heart-broken, and the persecuted ; but it is only with hope of future joys. He predicts that this world, where he has sown the seed of gospel truth, will be like a field where an enemy scatters tares in abundance among the growing grain ; whence no art can eradicate them till the final harvest, when angels shall gather the wicked for the flames, and the righteous for the garner of God. Then, when vengeance is taken on the ungodly, shall

the righteous shine forth like the sun in the kingdom of their Father.* Then they have peace and rest and glory. Our Lord's great prophecy† upon the Mount of Olives, concerning Jerusalem's overthrow, his own coming, and the completion of the age or "end of the world," is in harmony with all the rest. It is a tale of woe from beginning to the end. Only one gleam of light breaks in—"This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world." But this is only for a *witness* unto all nations, to save the believers, and make more sure the perdition of the unbelievers, and *then* shall the end come.‡ Until then there is no permanent rest. Deceivers, wars, commotions, famines, pestilences, and earthquakes; these are but the beginning of sorrows. Afflictions, persecutions, betrayals, hatred, offences, false prophets, and iniquities abounding and quenching the little of love that remained, are the characteristics

* Math. xiii : 24-32; 37-43.

† See a valuable work with this title, by Rev. D. D. Buck. Nashville: Graves, Marks & Co.

‡ Crysostom, Bishop of Constantinople, A.D. 400, in commenting on Math xxiv : 14, says: "Attend with care to what is said. He saith *not* when it hath been *believed* by all *men*, but when it hath been *preached to all*. For this cause he also said: 'For a *witness to the nations*,' to show that he doth not *wait* for all men to believe, and then for him to come; since the phrase, 'for a witness,' hath this meaning,—for accusation, for reproof, for condemnation of them that have not believed." *Homilies*, part I, p. 141, *Oxford Translation*. See "THE VOICE OF THE CHURCH on the Reign of Christ, by D. T. Taylor, p. 93.

of those times. Jerusalem was to be overthrown—tribulations, great and mighty, were to come—then signs in heaven above, and earth beneath—and then the appearing of Christ, the surprise of the world, the gathering of the nations before his throne, the scenes of judgment, the great separation, the damnation of the wicked, and the welcome of the righteous to the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world.*

The various similitudes and allusions by which Jesus illustrates the completion of this dispensation, and his own return from heaven, are in perfect accord with all we have read thus far. He predicts no days of peace till he shall have first subdued his foes. He came not to send peace on earth but a sword. He would have the fire that he was to send already kindled. He warns, and cautions, and encourages his little flock, by the promise of a kingdom, to sell and give alms, and to stand steadfastly awaiting his return. He will have them content with nothing else. They must make no compromise. They must pray for God's will to "*be done in earth as it is done in heaven,*" and pray till the prayer is answered. They must watch. He is coming as comes the master from a long journey, and they must be ready to open to him. He is coming as comes the thief in the darkness of night—they must watch for his approach. He will come as the

* Math. xxiv and xxv; Mark xiii; Luke xxi.

lord returns from the wedding-feast, and however unseasonable the hour, they must stand with their loins girt and their lights burning to receive him. He will come when the evil servant riots in security, nor apprehends his approach, and he will cut him asunder. He will come as the bridegroom cometh, too soon for virgins who are unprepared to go in to the marriage. He will come on the world as the deluge came in the days of Noah, and arrest with judgment the careless iniquity of a sinful generation. He will come as the lightning-flash that gleams in the darkened sky. He will come as fire came down upon the cities of the plain in the midst of their unsuspecting slumbers, and destroyed them all.* Such were the Saviour's own illustrations of the awful facts. Such *his* representations of the way in which the controversy with man should be closed up. When at last earth rejected her Saviour, and heaven opened wide its everlasting doors to receive the King of Glory in,† he heard howling after him the seditious protest of a fallen race—"We will not have this man to reign over us"—And when he shall return, invested with dominion and majesty, while he gives honors to his followers, he shall say, "But those, mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before me."‡ Then the strife closes at

* Luke xii: 22-50; Math. vi: 10; 2 Pet. iii: 10; Math. xxiv: 36-51, xxv: 1-13; Luke xvii: 23-37. †Ps. xxiv: 7-10. ‡Lk. xix: 27.

the end—closes as it ever has closed, in judgments that overthrow and exterminate the foes of God, and which thus pave the path for mercies upon his people.

The writings and teachings of the various apostles, clearly indicate that the instructions of Christ regarding this subject, had not been misapprehended by them. In their eyes creation was groaning beneath the bondage of corruption, from which it could only find deliverance when the sons of God were manifested and received the adoption, to wit, the redemption of their body.* Paul brings to our view the time when Christ who now hath all power both in heaven and in earth given into his hands—shall, after having accomplished the gathering of his chosen ones, deliver up the kingdom to God even the Father, that HE may reign till he hath put all things under his feet. So when all things are subdued unto Christ by the father's might, and even death, the last enemy, is destroyed; then Christ himself-receiving everlasting dominion and glory, shall "be subject to him that did put all things under him, that God may be all and in all."† The same power that shall overcome mortality and transform man from his abased condition unto the likeness of the Redeemer's glory, shall also enable him "to subdue all things unto himself."‡

* Rom. viii: 19-23. † 1 Cor. xv: 21-28; Phillip. iii: 21. ‡ Dan. vii: 13, 14.

To the Thessalonian Church, Paul writes of the persecutions which they endured, and directs their hopes to a *rest* which they shall receive “when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints and admired in all them that believe in that day.”* Again, he foretold the coming of a lawless and ungodly one, whose course of blasphemy, deception, and usurpation, would only be arrested by the power of Christ, who would consume him with the spirit of his mouth, and destroy him with the brightness of his coming,—the splendor of his personal appearance.†

His description of the latter days contrasts strangely with the modern notions of a world gliding calmly into scenes of peacefulness and repose. The express teaching of the Spirit is thus plainly declared. Those days are to be days of apostacy, when men shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing (or *vagabond*) spirits, and doctrines of demons,—speaking lies in hypocrisy,—having their consciences seared as with an hot iron,—forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats. And the duty of reminding the brethren of these things was

* 2 Thess. i: 5-10.

† 2 Thess. ii: 7-12.

urged by the consideration that if he did it he should thus be a good minister of Jesus Christ.* In another epistle the apostle predicts those evil times in words like these : “ This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy. Without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good. Traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God ; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts ; ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth ; men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith. But they shall proceed no further ; for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was.”† He exhorts Timothy to PREACH THE WORD, and enforces the duty by the assertion that “ the time will come when men will not endure sound doctrine ; but after their own lusts they shall heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears ; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and be turned unto fables.”‡ *These* are the inspired statements concerning the moral

* 1 Tim. iv : 1-6. † 2 Tim. iii : 1-9. ‡ 2 Tim. iv : 3 4.

condition of those times which precede and usher in that outpouring of indignation which shall conclude God's controversy with men. There is no *hint* of improvement here. The picture is dark at first, darker afterwards, and darkest at the close. First mercy is rejected, then long suffering is abused, then threatenings and admonitions are despised, and then judgment is inflicted.

The Apostle James also depicts the same scenes. He pours his denunciations upon the rich and proud, the oppressors of the suffering and the down-trodden, and while he threatens the one with terrible vengeance, he bids the other be patient in all their tribulations. Thus he writes—"Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. Behold, the hire of the laborers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth; and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter. Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you. Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the

husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; establish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.”*

The testimony of Peter is equally decisive concerning the moral condition of the world at the completion of this age. There were to come in the last days scoffers—men of lust and blasphemy, men who derided judgment and denied punishment, men who were willingly ignorant of past inflictions, men who had even forgotten the deluge that overwhelmed the ungodly of old, and denied all future retribution. And men such as these, were to sneeringly and scoffingly ask, “Where is the promise of his coming?” Then, in the midst of all this carnal ease, would break in terror on them, “the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men.” Despite of all their security, and all their scepticism, and all their misbelief, when the patience and long suffering of God shall have extended to all appropriate and profitable bounds, then “the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.” And in view of such a sudden and terrible catastrophe, how appropriate the exhortation, “Seeing then that all these

* James v: 1-8.

things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?" Then, too, how bright the sunny landscape, that smiles in holy radiance beyond the scenes of doom. Then, when the controversy is ended, scepticism overthrown, infidelity refuted, and every foe destroyed, "We, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness;" and "seeing we look for such things, let us be diligent, that we may be found of him in peace."*

Similar to the language of Peter is that of Jude, who after describing the sins and iniquities of which men were to be guilty, says: "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to *execute judgment upon all*, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him. These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage"—and having thus foretold their doom, he returns to remind his brethren that others had predicted it, and

* 2 Peter iii: 1-13; Isaiah lxv: 17.

to exhort them as to their duty under these most dangerous circumstances—"But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; how that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit. But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."* To us to-day is this admonition especially necessary. For if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And while on the one hand many reject the word of God, and on the other many deny the power and influences of his Holy Spirit, it becomes the Christian not only to build himself up in his holy *faith*, but to pray always in the *Holy Ghost* that he may attain eternal life at last.

The testimony of one other inspired writer, "the disciple whom Jesus loved," must conclude this long array of evidence concerning the termination of God's controversy with man. If we examine his epistles, we find in them no hope expressed of any peaceful adjustment of the matter. "We know," he says, "that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness."† He warns them of an antichrist by whose presence the last time was disturbed, and he

* Jude 14-21. † 1 John v: 19; properly "in the wicked one."

declares that there were already many antichrists, "hereby we know it is the last time."* These were the tokens of the latter times—not righteousness, but sin—not glory, but shame. But it is especially in that wondrous "Revelation of Jesus Christ," which he received while an exile in Patmos, that we are furnished with more definite and particular information concerning the changeful destinies of the church and of the world. Around this book there gathers at times the deepest gloom, and anon the brightest glory. The mutations of time are here most clearly unfolded. The world's future history from the days of the revelator is here most strikingly disclosed. And the whole representation is perfectly coincident with the concurrent testimony of the numerous writers whose words have been quoted. He represents the world as at war with God. Its governments are beastly, blasphemous, and blood-thirsty. The people of God are in affliction, and the martyr-host cries out, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" And they are bidden to *rest* until others like them have endured a similar fate.† The warfare goes on. Judgments are poured upon the nations, but without effect.—They will not repent. Trumpet after trumpet sounds in their ears the terrible warning of approaching woes; vial after vial of wrath is poured in fury up-

* 1 John iii: 18; iv: 3.

† Rev. vi: 9-12.

on them ; storm after storm of indignation comes down, but it works in them no permanent reformation. The harlot still plies her wiles. The nations are still drunk from her cup. The church and the witnesses of God still wear their raiment of sackcloth, and still shed their blood for the testimony of God. All this continues till, in the midst of it, the great day of divine wrath comes, and among the proud and mighty arises the question, "Who shall be able to stand?"* Each trumpet in the succession sounds more and more loudly the dread alarm, until the seventh breaks like a peal of thunder upon the rebellious host, and great voices from heaven proclaim the controversy accomplished and the order changed, saying, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshiped God, saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come ; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned. And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great ; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth —

* Rev. vi: 17.

And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunders, and an earthquake, and great hail.”* Here is a terminus. The nations are angry; it is their final ebullition of impotent rage—but the work of God proceeds, and all heaven gives thanks that the Lord and his Christ are hence to rule supreme and unopposed in this misgoverned world. And when the decision is *made*, then the temple in heaven is opened—a manifestation of glory is seen at which the fires of Sinai lose their brightness—the ark of a *new* covenant is there disclosed—an earthquake shakes “not only earth but heaven also”—every rebel is destroyed—every thing that can be shaken is removed, while the “kingdom that cannot be moved” remains as the heritage of the poor in spirit and the holy in heart.†

Again, we behold earth represented as it was by the prophet Joel, filled with wickedness and ripening for the vengeful harvest. At last “the vine of the earth is reaped,” and cast into the wine-press of the wrath of God, which is trodden in fury, while blood flows from it in torrents as to the horses’ bridles.‡ Still further, when vial on vial of wrath have been poured out, at length spirits of demons go forth upon their lying errands, and breed commotion and discontent abroad, and gather the nations

* Rev. xi: 15-19.

† Math. v: 3.

‡ Rev. xiv: 15-20.

to war against God Almighty. Then comes a warning—"Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame." Then as the seventh vial of wrath is poured into the air, there peals from the throne the cry, "It is done." And then voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, an earthquake such as never was before, add terror to the scene. The great city is divided—the cities of the nations fall—Babylon drinks the cup of wrath—the islands flee—the mountains are removed—and the terror of God's judgments falls fearfully upon the earth.*

Once more, we behold great Babylon exulting in the glory of her luxury and wealth, and singing like a harlot—"I sit a queen and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow;"† when "*in one day*" her plagues come upon her. She falls like a millstone hurled into the depths of the sea. The voice of mirth and melody, the sounds of gladness and prosperity, the tokens of wealth and glory, shall be known in her no more. In her is found the blood of prophets and saints, and all that were slain on the face of the earth. For her the mighty mourn, but over her the holy prophets and apostles—yea, all the hosts of heaven—unite in rejoicing at her downfall. And then when the struggle is over, the strife past, the judgment inflicted, and the controversy closed,

* Rev. xvi : 13-21.

† Rev. xviii : 7.

the shout of triumphant exultation breaks forth in the highest heavens. Much people cry Hallelujah, and ascribe salvation and glory and honor and power unto the Lord their God for his judgments and his vengeance, which he has inflicted. And again they cry, Hallelujah ! Then the elders and the glorious cherubim lift up their voices and worship God, crying, Amen, hallelujah ! And a voice came out of the *throne*, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great. And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Hallelujah : for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him : for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.”* Thus the leader of heaven’s high devotions calls forth an universal shout of joy, and all his servants answer to the call. Those whose

“ Silent harps, o’er Babel’s streams,
Were hung on willows lone,”

will hush their songs no longer. When the harlot falls, the true bride rises. When foes wail, then the saints of God rejoice ; and when God closes in wrath the reign of sin on eareh, then all heaven’s harps awake in rapturous melody, and all heaven’s voices break forth in triumphant songs—“ Hallelujah, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth !”

* Rev. xviii and xix : 1-8.

Another scene rolls in. The heavens are opened, and the white war-horses come marching down the parted skies. The Captain of salvation marshals the host of God. He is faithful and true. In righteousness he judges and makes war. His eyes are like a flame of fire. Many crowns of glory adorn his brow, and he had a *wonderful* or *secret* name written, which was known to none but himself.* His garments had been baptized in blood, and his name is called "THE WORD OF GOD."† Following him are heaven's warriors, clad in spotless white. He travels in the greatness of his strength. He goes forth to decide the controversy of God with man—to accomplish the same scenes which have been already depicted under so many different emblems. "Out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with

* Rev. xix : 12; Is. ix : 6; Judges xiii : 18.

† Rev. xix : 13. In this passage we learn the origin of this title as applied to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; and if individuals, instead of reading God's revelations *backwards*, had read them in the order in which they were given, they would have had no occasion for their vain and fruitless searches among Jewish traditions or Greek philosophies to find the origin of the title "*Ho Logos*," or "*THE WORD*." Let it always be remembered, that the Apocalypse was written *before* John's Gospel. No other writer in the New Testament ever applied the term "*Ho Logos*" to Christ, because their writings were finished *before* the Apocalypse was given. John's gospel was written *after* the Apocalypse. In the revelation, Christ is for the *first time* called by this title, "*Ho Logos tou Theou*"—"The Word of God." Then, when after his return from Patmos, John takes up the pen to write his *gospel*, he uses this word, which he learned on Patmos,—“In the beginning was *Ho Logos*—THE WORD, etc.—John i : 1.

it he should smite the nations : and he shall rule them with a rod of iron : and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, *King of kings and Lord of lords.*"* He comes to decide by his sword the long-pending dispute. An angel stands in the sun, and calls the beasts and birds to feed upon his foes. Rebellious man girds on his harness for the closing strife. The beastly government is there. The kings of the earth have gathered their armies to war against the King of kings, and against his hosts. The nations are angry. His wrath is come. They will oppose his reign. They will test their titles by the strength of their arms. But the contest is short. It is hard to war with Omnipotence. The beast is captured, and with him his lying prophet, and both are hurled alive into the seething waves of a lake of fire and brimstone. The remnant fall beneath the sword of the conqueror, and the fowls of heaven revel and feast upon their rotting carcasses. The deceiver's spell is broken, and he is hurled into the abyss ; and the saints and martyrs and witnesses of God are enthroned to reign with Christ.† Away beyond this, in the distance, still another scene presents to view Satan released, going forth to deceive the nations that are in the four quarters of the earth, gathering them to battle—a host countless as the sand of the

* Rev. xix : 15-16.

† Rev. xx : 1-5.

sea. But the deceiver's last device has failed. His hour is come. His hosts compass the camp of the saints about and the beloved city, and then, upon that countless throng, the last reserve in Satan's mighty army, comes down the storm of sheeted flame, with which God decides his controversy with them. Their last act is rebellion, and the fire devours them. The deceiver, too, is hurled into the same fiery abyss into which the beast and the false prophet were cast, there to endure the torments assigned them, day and night, forever and ever.*

Again the scene changes. The great white throne is established, and the Judge summons the generations of the dead before his awful presence. The sea yields up its hosts, from the multitudes that the deluge engulfed down to the latest generation. Death's heavy chains are sundered. The gates of Hades are thrown open by him who bears the keys thereof,† and the long buried multitudes congregate to hear their solemn doom. Death, with his prison Hades, are cast into the lake of fire, and there consumed and swallowed up in victory. The book of life is opened, and those not registered there are cast into the lake of fire, there to reap the wages of sin, and endure the second death. There the fearful, the faithless, the vile, the impure, the blood thirsty, the idolatrous, and the sorcerers, all have their part, the second death in the lake of fire and brimstone.‡

* Rev. xx: 7-10. † Rev. i: 18. ‡ Rev. xx: 12-15; xxi: 8.

THE CONTROVERSY IS CLOSED. Death, the last foe, is destroyed,* and the warring world is at peace with God. The first heaven and first earth, the scenes of all the strife, have passed away, being transformed by the dissolving fires, and there springs to view a new heaven and a new earth. The holy Jerusalem descends from God out of heaven in all the magnificence of its divine adorning, and those whose earthly house was dissolved by the fires of the consummation, are invested, are clothed upon, with their house which is from heaven.† The ancient oath of God is now performed‡—from the jasper walls of the celestial city, flows forth in perpetual tide the glory of God to fill and irradiate the world. The patriarchs behold the long-looked for city that hath foundations, whose builder and whose maker is God.§ Its gates of pearl are wide open that all may enter. No night hangs its pall of gloom above the gorgeous scene. The city and all its adornments shine perpetually in everlasting day. No temple is therein, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple thereof. No defilement ever cometh there. From the throne there rolls a crystal river, and its waters flow with life, and health, and blessing. In the midst of the city, in the grand central space, stands “the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.”|| There it puts forth its monthly fruits and healing

* 1 Cor. xv : 26. † 2 Cor. v : 1-3. ‡ Num. xiv : 21.

§ Heb. xi : 9, 10, 16. || Rev. ii : 7 ; xxii : 2.

leaves, fairer and brighter than in the paradise of old. And without those jasper walls, wide as the eye can behold, the earth blooms in all the beauty of Eden. A rejoicing and peaceful multitude fill up its beauteous glades, and make the air resound with shouts and praises. The mountains break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field clap their hands. The curse of God is forever removed. Instead of the thorn there blooms the myrtle, instead of the briar the fir tree, and all around declares the Creator's glory, majesty, and love.*

The Lord hath now a controversy with the nations no longer. The nations that have warred against his government have drank the wine cup of his fury, and become "as though they had not been."† But in the sunny radiance of divine glory, "the nations of the saved" delight to walk, and into that city the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor, and pay reverent homage to the King of kings. And so the scenes of bliss and blessedness stretch away and fill the fair landscape of futurity, through all the ages of eternity—and God shall be

"ALL AND IN ALL."

* Is. lv : 12, 13.

† Obadiah 16.

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
THE VOICE OF THE CHURCH.

THE VOICE OF THE CHURCH, ON THE COMING and Kingdom of the Redeemer; or, a history of the doctrine of the reign of Christ on earth, by D. T. TAYLOR; revised and edited with a preface; by H. L. HASTINGS, Published by H. L. HASTINGS, 49 Arcade, Rochester, N. Y. For sale by Lindsay and Blakistan, Philadelphia; M. Grant, 167 Hanover St., Boston; J. J. Howland, 229 Broadway, N. Y. One volume, 12 mo. pp. 420. Price \$1.00, postage 18cts.; sent by mail when desired.

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Yours with Christian regard, HORATIUS BONAR.

*From Rt. Rev. John H. Hopkins, Episcopal Bishop of Vermont.*

*Dear Sir.* Your request to have a copy of my two discourses on the Second Advent printed in 1843, is very cheerfully complied with. I have to thank you or your publisher for a copy of your late work, "The Voice of the Church," which seems to be a very elaborate and well arranged statement of authorities upon that highly important subject. My other engagements have not allowed of my reading it with the care it deserves; but from the hasty glance which I have been able to give it, I doubt not that it is well adapted to be eminently useful and acceptable.

With my best wishes for your full success in your labors for the cause of divine truth, and with much regard, I remain your friend and servant in Christ,

JOHN H. HOPKINS.

*Burlington, Vt., Dec. 6th, 1856.*

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